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Gandhi, Holy Humbug • E.P.A. and Other Messes

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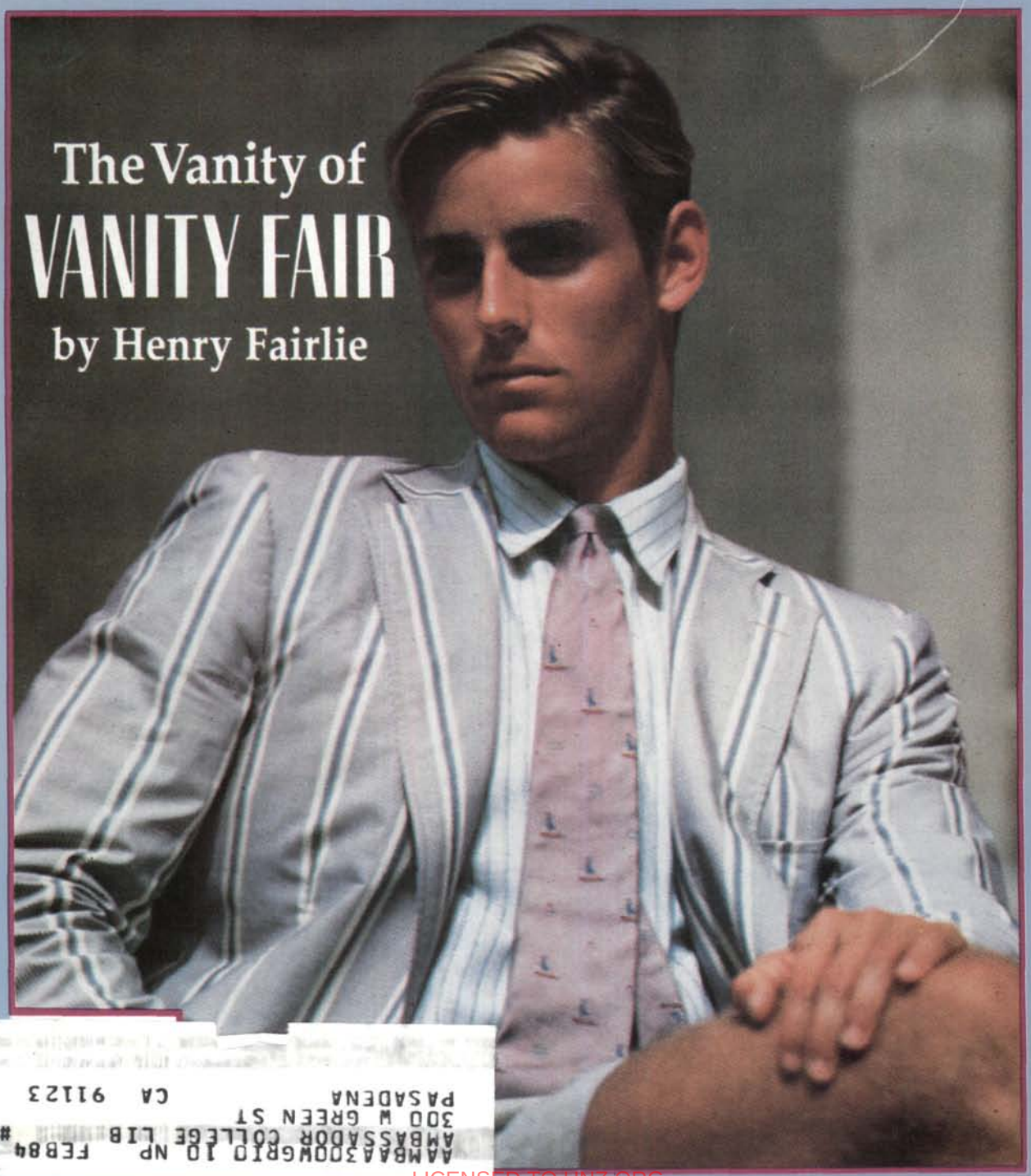

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Symptoms that can break your heart.

A tightness in my chest...
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A pain in my neck, sometimes even in my jaw or teeth...
A shortness of breath.

One or more of these symptoms may be a warning of angina pectoris.
Angina, usually a chest pain, is a signal—part of the body mechanism which tips you off that something is not quite right. In the case of angina pectoris, the blood flow to your heart muscle is not delivering the amount of oxygen and nourishment that your heart needs, and not removing wastes. Angina may be telling you that your blood flow through the vessels feeding your heart muscle is being reduced, either by thickening of the arteries (atherosclerosis), spasm, or a combination of both.

Angina symptoms may occur at varying times in any one person and are different for different people. Angina can be a pressure, a tightness, a discomfort or "indigestion-like." It may be pain in your shoulder or neck. The important thing is to pay attention when your body tells you something is wrong. You should see your doctor so that an early diagnosis can be made.

What's to be done?
Your doctor can help you reduce your cardiac workload by reducing weight, cholesterol, tension and stress. And he has a full range of medicines that can relieve coronary spasm, improve the flow of blood to the heart and normalize heart rhythms. You can help yourself with proper rest and relaxation, time for pleasure and recuperation, and a program of moderate exercise.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

FOUNDED 1914 — ISSUE 3,557

WASHINGTON, D.C. — MARCH 21, 1983

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THE NEW REPUBLIC, Volume 188, Number 11, Issue 3,557, March 21, 1983. (Printed on March 2, 1983.) Published weekly (except the weeks of July 4, August 1, September 5, and December 26) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. Advertising: (202) 331-9787. Leadership Network advertising: (212) 684-5500. Single copy, $1.50; yearly subscriptions, $36; foreign, $43. © 1982 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide and Media Review Digest. Available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106. Member of the Audit Bureau of Circulation. Unsolicited manuscripts are welcome, but cannot be returned unless accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. **Subscribers:** Please send all remittances, changes of address, and inquiries about subscriptions and undelivered copies to **Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 955, Farmingdale, NY 11737**. For subscription problems call **800-645-9559** (N.Y. state residents 800-732-9119).

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CORRESPONDENCE

THE DEFICITS DEBATE

To the editors:

We appreciate Bob Kuttner's praise for *Promoting World Recovery: A Statement on Global Economic Strategy*, by twenty-six (not twenty-eight) economists from 14 countries, released by the Institute for International Economics in December ("The Crackpot Center," TNR, February 14). However, Mr. Kuttner erred in suggesting an inconsistency between our proposals for global recovery and the program for cutting the outyear deficits in the U.S. budget launched in January by Peter G. Peterson and five former Secretaries of the Treasury.

Promoting World Recovery explicitly calls on the United States to take "firm action now to reduce the budget deficit in the medium term" in order to help achieve the reduction in real interest rates that is critically important to foster global expansion in 1983. Such budget reductions in 1985 and beyond are of course the basic thrust of the Bipartisan Appeal.

Moreover, contrary to the characterizations in the article, the appeal recognizes that "today's deficit is obviously in part a result of today's recession." It also recognizes the critical importance of monetary policy, noting that "the present recession has clearly been aggravated by a collision between tight money and loose budget"; it notes as well that "many who signed that statement also favor other changes, such as in monetary policy. . . ."

The institute proposes a comprehensive short-run recovery strategy, whereas the appeal focuses on the budget and its impact over both shorter and longer horizons. On the central issue of the outyear deficits, however, they seek similar policy changes.

C. FRED BERGSTEN
Institute for International Economics
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

Bob Kuttner's "The Crackpot Center" does its best to promote and exacerbate a controversy between liberal Keynesians and the people—such as the subscribers to Peter G. Peterson's recent "Bipartisan Budget Appeal"—who are worried about the huge impending federal deficits. He will deny the charge: the contradiction, he asserts, is already there, and only a few dupes like me let themselves be coopted into supporting Peterson's attempt to substitute Herbert Hooverism for Reaganomics; most liberal economists saw the trap in time to avoid it.

Because I consider this controversy not just unnecessary but likely to complicate the already forbiddingly difficult job of making responsible national economic policy this year, I undertake the thankless task of proving a negative: I do *not* think I was snookered.

Five or six weeks ago, I asked Charlie Schultze what line he was taking on the income tax cut scheduled for this July 1: should we move it forward? Or push it back? His answer was: both.

I don't think he was joking. The economy badly needs a stimulus these days: whatever the deficit, we ought to let the tax cut go into effect, although I'd like to see some limit on the benefits to the wealthy. For the same reason, the part of the Greenspan commission's compromise for rescuing the Social Security system that would move the 1985 payroll tax increase up to 1984—at the behest of the liberal Democrats, presumably good Keynesians—is dumb.

At the same time, there's no basis whatever for thinking we've licked stagflation. Sure, the C.P.I. went up only 3.9 percent last year; but the cost was the highest unemployment and business failure rates in forty to fifty years. We always knew we could slow down inflation if we were willing to pull hard enough on the monetary reins to choke the economy into unconsciousness; but what happens when the animal revives?

Those huge federal deficits we face in 1985 and 1986 are going to contribute powerfully either to renewed inflation—if the Federal Reserve expands the monetary base enough to finance them without pushing up interest rates; or to stagnation, because of the high interest rates they will produce; or to both.

There's no necessary conflict between these two propositions. The question is only one of timing. The Keynesians and supply siders are both right in arguing that economic recovery comes first, that it will automatically reduce the deficit, and that neither tight money nor drastic efforts to balance the 1983 and 1984 budgets makes sense. But Mr. Peterson and his colleagues are equally right in insisting that bringing the 1985 and 1986 budgets under control is essential if we are not to repeat the dreary stagflationary history of the last ten years, and we had better make a start now.

It can be done, in ways that will not thwart economic recovery, or offend our sense of social justice. But it's going to be very hard, politically. When, then, a large group of prominent people such as Peterson has assembled—including such stalwarts as John Connally and William Simon—asserts, first, that we have to cut down on the growth of military spending, and, second, that the way in which nondefense expenditures has been cut so far has been monstrously unjust (falling twice as heavily on programs helping the poor and near-poor than on the much larger ones that benefit people regardless of need) and that injustice has got to be reversed, it seems to me irresponsible for the Keynesians to have refused to join them.

Or has Bob Kuttner found some other, politically feasible way of attacking the dreary cycle of inflation and depression that has escaped my attention?

ALFRED E. KAHN
Special Consultant
National Economic Research Associates
Washington, D.C.

To the editors:

I regret that my name was associated with an advertisement that has come to be seen as a simple plea for a balanced budget as a cure for our economic problems—even if a close reading of that advertisement reveals a more sophisticated view. The balanced budget as a cure-all for our economic problems is consistent neither with what I believe nor with what I have been writing about for the past few years.

At the same time I do not accuse Peter G. Peterson of any duplicity. I should have been old enough and wise enough to know the political context in which the advertisement would be used, and not sign anything so sensitive based on a phone call without having a chance to look at the final language. I blame only one person for the resulting predicament—myself.

LESTER C. THUROW
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Boston, Massachusetts

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TRB

FROM WASHINGTON

Reagan's Record

Ronald Reagan strikes me as a simple man who sees life as a series of movie scripts. He is now coming to the toughest part of his incumbency, where attention shifts from domestic to world matters. The West Germans will have finished their election by the time most readers receive this issue, so we shall know better how things stand in Europe. On the economic front, the next big item is the Economic Summit, an annual event which will be held this May in Williamsburg, Virginia. Representatives of seven nations will participate. These developments throw big problems at Reagan. Does he have the leadership and flexibility to restrain America's defense expenditure profligacy? Unless it is checked, it is expected to pile up a $267 billion deficit, and that could ultimately help trigger a slide that would turn today's global stagnation into a global depression. And can he control his hawkish encounter with Soviet Russia, which threatens to splinter our allies? In many ways these problems overlap; they are not two problems, but one.

In an article in *The Economist* preparatory to the election, former West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt writes of "the inevitable need for American leadership." In the course of a detailed study, Schmidt drops the remark, "America must not give the Europeans the mistaken impression that, economically or militarily, it wants to put the squeeze on the Soviet Union and the other Communist states." Exactly. Europeans know this is impossible. They want economic health and social peace. Moscow is the aggressor in Europe. But can't some tension-relieving formula be found? The record is not reassuring.

For example, Reagan got into a self-defeating struggle with NATO allies over the natural gas pipeline deal with the Soviets from which Secretary of State George Shultz ultimately extricated him. Reagan picked Eugene Rostow and Paul Nitze to negotiate with Russia (both of whom opposed the SALT II deal) and later fired Rostow, apparently because he took negotiations beyond the zero-zero limitation formula. Reagan picked 36-year-old Kenneth Adelman to be America's top arms control official, which the Senate Foreign Relations Committee grudgingly referred to the Senate. The President's gesture to meet Soviet leader Yuri Andropov anywhere, at any time, to discuss the zero-zero proposal doesn't carry much weight. It seems theatrical.

Furthermore, the President persists in calling for big arms expenditures. It wasn't that Jimmy Carter didn't spend money for defense. He increased spending 3 to 5 percent a year after inflation. Reagan wants 7 percent. The present defense budget calls for $1.554 trillion for 1984-1988. It comes at a time of monstrous federal deficits.

I walked over to the National Press Club last week to hear a presentation of the case for decreased defense spending. In a city that likes name-dropping, this was a pretentious list. Sponsors said they could save $135 billion over five years. There was Bob McNamara, Secretary of Defense under Kennedy and Johnson, and Cyrus Vance, Carter's Secretary of State. They were speaking for McGeorge Bundy, Kennedy's National Security Adviser, and retired Admiral Elmo R. Zumwalt, former chief of naval operations. They represented the Bipartisan Budget Appeal, founded by former Commerce Secretary Peter G. Peterson, and five ex-Treasury Secretaries (Blumenthal, Connally, Dillon, Fowler, and Simon). The Budget Appeal is a coalition of five hundred business, academic, and professional leaders who have a plan to balance the budget by the end of the decade. Quite a solid crowd. A wave of indebtedness hangs over the world economy, they argue, combined with a widespread fear of a world arms race.

McNamara and Vance don't look like longhairs. McNamara is a former head of the Ford Motor Company, Vance a Wall Street lawyer. They represent their views with quiet confidence. Take nuclear weapons, for example: "It makes no sense to spend very large sums on things we do not know how to do," they begin. "There is no persuasive evidence," they say, "that either the U.S. or U.S.S.R. knows how to conduct a protracted nuclear war in such a way as to achieve any meaningful goal. Yet we are now in the process of investing billions for that purpose." They say the funds for ballistic missile defense are being hiked from "$520 million in fiscal year 1983 to $709 million in 1984, and to $1.5 billion in 1985." The argument is couched in technical jargon, but some salient points are comprehensible. These former defense chiefs would eliminate some big items right away: the MX missile, the B-1 bomber, and some forty-two ships.

Ronald Reagan has reached the point in his Presidency that often determines how it will be rated. He has had substantial success in some areas. Inflation and interest rates are down. The stock market has touched a new high. A President often moves to foreign affairs after midterm, partly because he finds he has greater freedom there. Reagan has made some changes, such as getting rid of temperamental Al Haig, replacing him with the quiet-mannered, comfortable Shultz, who is a pet in Washington, partly because we are personifying our hopes. Will Reagan himself meet the opportunity?

I keep thinking of fifty years ago this week, when F.D.R. took over. The banks were closed and he reopened them. Would people put in money or take it out? It was a matter of trust. They put it in. In New York stocks jumped 15 points and the ticker clicked the message, "Happy Days Are Here Again."

Now it's Reagan's turn. There isn't a war, of course. Can he restore confidence? Everywhere people show they want a calm interval. At the governors' conference here last week delegates yelled approval for cuts in defense to lower budget deficits. European allies want movement in negotiating with Moscow. The McNamara-Vance appeal can't be brushed off. Will it have any effect? Not yet, anyway. The Administration wants to put another $60 million into El Salvador. That's the way Vietnam started.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC
MARCH 21, 1983

THE ATROCITY IN ASSAM

Modernity is not only a historical term. It is a geographical term as well. There are places—the Indian state of Assam is one—where the slaughter of children is a form of political expression. The introduction of Western ideas and institutions into such places has complicated them, but it has not completely changed them. Few events could more dramatically reveal the contradictions of the postcolonial world than the atrocity in Assam. In the grimmest way, it is instructive.

What happened is now widely known. Almost two thousand people were killed in what the papers call "election violence"—an ominous oxymoron. At least a thousand of these victims were Moslem immigrants butchered in a single day by the machetes of Hindu tribesmen. Many of these immigrants were refugees from Bangladesh who streamed across the border in 1971 during the civil war. They number in the millions. ("Bigger than Exodus, larger than the Partition crowds, the many-headed monster poured into India," wrote the novelist Salman Rushdie.) They differ from the inhabitants of Assam not only religiously, but linguistically as well. They speak Bengali, which the Assamis hate. And they cast a shadow over the economy of Assam as well as over its culture. According to the student agitators who lead the nativist forces in Assam, the Bengali Moslems were taking precious jobs and precious land.

For all these reasons the Hindus of Assam opposed the state and federal elections upon which Prime Minister Indira Gandhi insisted. They feared the elections would result in a significant increase in Moslem representation. When it became clear that Mrs. Gandhi would not be swayed, Moslem settlements in the rural areas of Assam were attacked. "It was every person for himself," said a twenty-year-old farmer standing over a cluster of corpses, "and our women, the old men, and the children could not run fast enough."

Two conclusions may be drawn from the massacre concerning the real conditions of political life in the third world, and their porousness to Western innovations.

The first has to do with the nature of nationalism. The third world did not go smoothly, in the words of one historian, "from empire to nation." The idea of the nation competes with the idea of the tribe. In places like Assam it is losing the competition. Here Mahatma Gandhi's folly is plain. His opposition to the principle of partition was based upon a profound misunderstanding of the depth of the religious, ethnic, and linguistic divisions in the subcontinent. Jinnah, the Moslem leader who wanted a Pakistan, not Gandhi, the Hindu leader who wanted only an India, knew the people. (The events in India disabuse us of Richard Attenborough's demonological portrait of Jinnah.) And even Jinnah was too sanguine. It took less than a quarter of a decade before the nation of Pakistan fell apart. And the nation of India is badly under strain. "The country is higher than any party, any movement, or individual," Mrs. Gandhi protested to Parliament in the aftermath of the Assam massacre. "Who will benefit if the nation is broken into bits?"

There are fissiparous forces elsewhere in India, too; it lives always against the tug of regional loyalties. (The movement of the Sikhs in the Punjab may be especially divisive.) Like Pakistan, India was an idea before it was a reality, a new arrangement at odds with old arrangements. The collective consciousness aroused by the experience of colonialism was only intermittently a national consciousness. Yet the assertion of more particular forms of collective consciousness—religious, ethnic, tribal, and so on—may break up a nation. This is the dilemma of many new states. Whereas the nation refused to be contained in the larger whole of the empire, its member groups must be contained in the larger whole of the nation. Nationalism is not particularism. Compared to empire, the nation is particular. Compared to ethnicity, the nation is total. Having once used nationalism to assert some differences, the third world must now use it to suppress other differences. Mrs. Gandhi correctly understood the implications of the Assami

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tribesmen's actions for the coherence of her country.

The second conclusion has to do with the nature of democracy. Mrs. Gandhi, who was attacked after the massacre for not postponing the elections that provoked it, put forward a vigorous defense of constitutionalism. "They may not like the elections," Mrs. Gandhi said about the Assami extremists, "but do they have the right to stop them?" They had "no right to take the law into their own hands." The democratic process, she declared, must not bow to the pressures of the mob. "Do we have an obligation to our constitution? I believe we do." The Prime Minister perhaps protests too much. Her passion for democracy has been, let us say, seasonal; she had her own reasons for wanting that election, which was sure to send Moslems to New Delhi who would strengthen her position in Parliament. Still, her rhetoric is good. Indians do indeed have an obligation to their constitution. But what is a constitution to a place like Assam? Will Hindu animists honor Thomas Jefferson? Will men who hurl spears at children pay any heed to John Locke?

The massacre near the little town of Nellie was not simply a disservice to democracy, like the stuffing of a ballot box, or a bad campaign financing law; it was, rather, a different order of political reality. This is the fundamental contradiction of democracy in the third world—it must be upheld in places where it is strange. The forces arrayed against democracy are formidable. Its failure, as in Assam, must be viewed with sympathy and with sorrow. It is not a betrayal of the democratic idea to insist that its institutions take time. Mrs. Gandhi's pious pronouncements were philosophically correct. They were also a bit beside the point. The atrocity in Assam is a reminder that the third world must master certain rudimentary principles and practices before such pronouncements can be certainly made good.

And yet democracy is a universal idea. Sooner or later, it holds, all men and women must be free. There are those for whom the slaughter in Assam will simply be more proof that the third world is a lost and lawless world. We disagree. It is not to be scorned, just as it is not to be admired. It is to be studied, rather, precisely as a test of the universality of our own most cherished ideals. What happened in Assam fills us with revulsion. But these are the birth pains of something new.

NOTEBOOK

□ NEWS ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTING EDITORS: Michael Walzer's *The Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* is being published this month by Basic Books. C. Vann Woodward's *American Counterpoint: Slavery and Racism in the North-South Dialogue* is appearing in paperback from Oxford University Press. In April Random House will publish *Poland: Genesis of a Revolution*, edited by Abraham Brumberg, and Dutton will publish *The Profane Art: Essays and Reviews* by Joyce Carol Oates. The writings of a former contributing editor, Gerald W. Johnson (he was associated with TNR from 1954 until 1980, when he died) have been published in *South-Watching: Selected Essays*, from the University of North Carolina Press. We are also pleased to announce that Anne Tyler has been elected a member of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters.

□ PURITY AND DANGER: The anthropology department of Stanford University has dismissed from its doctoral program a young scholar who reported on a crime he witnessed in the field. Steven Mosher was studying rural life in China and discovered a shocking fact about the Chinese birth control program—that it included forced abortions of women who were seven, eight, and even nine months pregnant. "There were even occasional cases of officially instigated infanticide," Mr. Mosher said. He published an article about these practices and was punished by his professors for "unprofessional conduct." The chairman of his department explained that bringing these facts to the attention of the public "may foreclose the opportunity of other researchers to carry out research in the same area and might harm the populations the anthropologist would like to assist." In short: bystanders with degrees are innocent. No doubt many of the faculty that fired Mr. Mosher are proud supporters of human rights causes. If so, they are also hypocritically so. What Mr. Mosher saw was not only of anthropological interest; it was also of moral interest. He was right to leap into print. A horror requires something more than a monograph.

□ EVERYBODY'S A CRITIC: There has been a lot of loose talk, during these Reagan years, about federal interference in civil liberties. In fact, the condition of our liberties is not as dolorous as some on the left claim. Still, now and then the Administration does something that makes such talk seem like an error in the right direction. The Justice Department has decided that three films by the National Film Board of Canada, including a documentary about Helen Caldicott that has been proposed for an Oscar, are "political propaganda." Under the Foreign Agent Registration Act, therefore, these films cannot appear here without a "dissemination list," which will furnish the Justice Department with the names and addresses of those showing and seeing the films, and a "disclaimer," which will instruct the viewers that the American government does not approve of what they are viewing. A spokesman for the Justice Department insists that it is interested not in the names and addresses of those who see the films, only in the "general categories" (presumably "concerned citizen" is not one of the categories it has in mind). He also says that "political propaganda" means anything that "can be construed to affect the policies of the United States," a test *Caddyshack* could probably pass but *E.T.* possibly

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couldn't. One of the films from up north, a short feature on acid rain, has already played Stateside, and on Capitol Hill, where it may have twisted some of the most important minds in the land. Of course "political propaganda" is simply the government's name for a view with which it disagrees. It is not the government's business to approve or disapprove of films. Ronald Reagan, who owes films a great deal, should know that. He should act quickly to get his government off the moviegoing people's backs.

□ THIRTY YEARS AGO IN THE NEW REPUBLIC: "Since Theodore Roosevelt's day it has been the purpose of every government agency to conserve our natural resources for the general welfare. Now, however, there is great danger that this principle will be set aside again. The Jay Cookes of today are demanding that President Eisenhower permit them the freedom to exploit public resources which President Grant permitted in his day. On the strength of his reckless campaign promise to 'return off-shore oil lands to the states,' Eisenhower and his Congress are being pressured to extend this to include public lands and public-power projects. Giving away our national rights in the submerged oil lands in the Continental Shelf can, as former Secretary of the Interior Oscar Chapman predicts, 'establish the pattern for the greatest give away program in the history of the world.'" ("The Blood and Treasure of Us All," The Editors, March 23, 1953.)

The rush to make a saint.

False Gandhi

RICHARD ATTENBOROUGH'S *Gandhi* purports to tell the life story of Mohandas K. Gandhi, known as the Mahatma—the Great Soul. In order to depict the hero and to bring home the special quality of his actions and his life, the director and the screenwriter construct a panorama of Indian history from World War I up to Independence in 1948. In the center of this panorama stands Gandhi, as though to indicate that the momentous events that a whole subcontinent experienced during this period had in him their epicenter and their cause. Ben Kingsley, the actor who plays the title role, has achieved an arresting verisimilitude in his impersonation of Gandhi, and it is his achievement that gives an otherwise undistinguished film a claim to be noticed. (See "The Man Who Could Not Lose," by Stanley Kauffmann, TNR, December 13, 1982.) In visual terms the film is not particularly inventive, and is at times stodgy and cliché-ridden. In terms of historical truth, this film is not consonant with the record, and its political and spiritual message is profoundly confused, fundamentally false, and unwholesome. For this reason, through no fault of his own, Ben Kingsley's outstanding depiction of Gandhi, instead of imaginatively conveying a truth that enlightens and moves, regrettably becomes mere specious, seductive mummery.

Throughout the film, the British rulers of India are portrayed as insensitive oppressors. The military wallow in complacency; brutality is their one answer to any difficulty, and low cunning their highest mental achievement. The civilians are likewise a poor lot who are completely out of their depth. Repression is their only policy, but when the inspired, determined, saintly figure of Gandhi challenges them to do their worst, they are thrown off their stride and bewilderment quickly sets in.

If only things had been so simple. Chelmsford, Reading, Irwin (among the Viceroys who had to deal with Gandhi and the Congress Party) were highly intelligent and subtle men, perhaps even too subtle, hesitant, and accommodating for the crude realities of demagogic politics as practiced by the Congress, and for the deep suspicion and fears that divided the Hindu from the Moslem. Irwin, in particular, far from being the martinet portrayed in the film, had a veritable weakness for Gandhi, whom he admired for being "sincere." Disastrously, this was the highest term of commendation in the political vocabulary of this Viceroy who, shortly afterward as Lord Halifax, saw the same valuable attribute in both Hitler and Mussolini.

The Moslem leader, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, is portrayed as a relentless and repellent figure, coldly determined to rebuff Gandhi's transparent and overflowing goodwill, and to effect a cruel separation between fellow Hindus. As all the world knows, Hindu-Moslem antagonism has deep and complex roots, and as events showed, Gandhi's goodwill—and even his murder at the hands of a Hindu fanatic—did nothing to assuage the antagonism or to moderate hatreds. Why, then, should two foreign filmmakers take it upon themselves to put Gandhi so emphatically among the virtuous sheep, and Jinnah so clearly among the irredeemable goats? Both, after all, were politicians doing their best for the interests they championed. If one wishes to apportion praise or blame, one should perhaps give a hint that while Jinnah was intractably for a separate Pakistan, Gandhi maintained against all the evidence, and in the most inflexible manner, that there had never been, and there could never be anything but one, indivisible India. This kind of empty posture is reminiscent of Gandhi's absurd exhortation to the German Jews to pacify and disarm Hitler by offering no resistance to his persecutions.

The most glaring example of this film's falseness to the record is its account of the Amritsar massacre of 1919. As is well known, a crowd assembled in an

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enclosed space in Amritsar was subjected on General Dyer's orders, without due warning, to a sustained fusillade in which hundreds were killed and thousands were wounded. Dyer was grievously at fault in not giving warning, and even more so in ordering his troops to fire, considering that the assembly, illegal as it was, posed no immediate danger to life or property. However, the film manages to give the impression that this was an unprovoked atrocity perpetrated on a jolly holiday crowd. The fact is that conditions in Amritsar and the Punjab were highly disturbed, precisely as a result of Gandhi's campaign of passive disobedience, and any government responsible for law and order (whether native or alien) would have had the greatest apprehension about the outcome of so much agitation. Again, the particular crowd in question was being harangued and incited by orators who clearly did not possess Gandhi's skill in simultaneously arousing and restraining an audience. At the time, Gandhi himself realized and regretted his own share of responsibility for letting things get out of hand at Amritsar. In the light of this massacre the question arises whether Gandhi's methods led to consequences very different from those of the provocative tactics deliberately adopted by avowed terrorists who hope to spread disaffection and rebelliousness among the population by goading the authorities into heavy-handed repression.

All of this makes the film a missed opportunity in the same way that *Lawrence of Arabia* was a missed opportunity. In both cases, the protagonists were deeply involved in dramatic political issues. A good filmmaker would have grasped the opportunity of showing a highly unusual character involved in the cut-and-thrust of politics with opponents just as earnest as he was, and whose case was just as respectable and just as worthy of consideration. As it is, though both films lavishly use technicolor, the pictures they manage to present are strictly black and white—the saintly Gandhi, the heroic, passionate Lawrence, doing battle against various foolish, low, and contemptible antagonists. There is dull, lifeless, sentimental, and pious edification, instead of the living, life-enhancing, tension of, say, *Viva Zapata* or *Circle of Deceit*, where truth about political action and its tragedies is imaginatively and vividly conveyed.

For there can be no doubt that, whatever else he was, Gandhi first and foremost was a political figure. He had made a discovery, namely that he could tease and provoke the British rulers of India, and make them lose their self-confidence, by disobeying them, by inciting the masses to disobedience, and accepting whatever punishment the rulers chose to mete out. This passive disobedience was a political weapon like any other, which might or might not work depending on the circumstances. With Hitler it would not have worked, nor with Stalin and his successors, nor with the despotic predecessors of the British in Gandhi's India. Whether it produced results in Gandhi's own lifetime is debatable. The British Labour Party came to power in 1945, and led by Clement Attlee, showed a blinkered determination to be quickly rid of India at all costs. It is a moot point whether under different circumstances the Hindu-Moslem civil war would have been unleashed, or Gandhi himself received the consecration of martyrdom, and of posthumous apotheosis.

CONTRARY to the impression given by the film, passive disobedience is not a particularly virtuous or elevated political weapon. It depends on rousing and inciting a crowd to break the law, and a roused crowd may become indistinguishable from a mob. Not even Gandhi, whose disdain of punishment and suffering gave him great moral authority, could manage to restrain the mob, particularly in the dark days of 1947-1948. In advocating that the law be flouted, Gandhi was treading on very dangerous ground. He began his career in South Africa precisely by claiming that all British subjects, Indian immigrants included, were entitled to equality under the law. This law, to which he had rightly appealed, he now dismissed as incompatible with his sentiments and beliefs. If law was to be broken at one's whim, was there anything or anyone that would not be perpetually at risk, and could even an independent India conduct its affairs in an orderly and peaceable manner?

Gandhi was also sentimental about poverty, as though the poor, simply by virtue of being poor, enjoy a moral superiority over those who are not poor. Connected with this was another paradoxical belief, namely that the salvation of Indians lay in going back to the village and each one spinning his own cloth. "It is not that we did not know how to invent machinery, but our forefathers knew that, if we set our hearts after such

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things, we would become slaves and lose our moral fibre. They therefore, after due deliberation, decided that we should do only what we could with our hands and feet. . . . The common people lived independently and followed their agricultural occupation. They enjoyed true home rule." This belief was paradoxical, of course, since an independent India, which Gandhi also desired, could not possibly survive if it were to follow Gandhi's anti-industrial recipes.

GANDHI WISHED INDIA to be rid of alien rule and to govern itself. However, willing the end, he was too squeamish or naive (or hypocritical) to will the means. Here we come to the central, and most pernicious confusion propagated by this film. Gandhi is portrayed both as a political leader and as a saint. He is made to say that his dearest, lifelong aspiration is to attain, and show the way to, Love and Truth. He also declares that deprivation, i.e., divesting oneself of all possessions, desires, attachments, is the way to God. To seek Love and Truth through deprivation is a difficult and noble endeavor, but what has it to do with the Congress Party, Indian independence, or passive disobedience which is forever verging on demagogy and mob rule? For the ascetic, intent on his heavenly vision, there must be mere baubles or worse, to be rejected with lassitude and contempt. The film, however, takes it for granted that between the political struggle and the religious vision there is no contradiction or incompatibility. In this, no doubt, the film passively accepts, and thus leaves unexplored, Gandhi's own ultimate confusion. Attenborough and his screenwriter thus join the many who have been seduced by Gandhi into holding the pernicious view that good or benevolent intentions invest a political cause with holiness, and that material poverty is itself virtuous. Ironically, it is among the well-fed and materially comfortable multitudes who flock to the picture palaces of the West that they spread this corrupt gospel. A further irony is that they are able to do so only by resorting to those powerfully seductive cinematic techniques developed by that Satanic inventiveness of the West that their hero despised and condemned.

A good film about Gandhi remains to be made. His life is documented enough and curious enough to provide an inspired director and screenwriter with abundant material to explore imaginatively and to convey with truth the tragic tensions and confusions between the sacred and the profane that pervade the life of this extraordinary man.

ELIE KEDOURIE

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The P.L.O.'s nonbattle of Algiers.

UNITED IT STALLS

CAN THE Palestine Liberation Organization develop a pragmatic diplomatic policy following its crushing military defeat in Lebanon? The sixteenth Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers last month disappointed those who had hoped so. Although the P.L.O. may be adapting to the new situation, its pace is so slow and hesitant as to throw into doubt its ability or desire to negotiate before it is too late. With Israel daily tightening its hold on the West Bank, and Jordan considering initiatives in its own right, the Palestinian leadership seems again to have thrown away opportunities, and to be further than ever from its goals.

In recent years the P.L.O. has gradually shifted away from its old, unattainable objective of destroying Israel and replacing it with an Arab state. The P.L.O. now proposes a Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza, though it persists in refusing to recognize Israel. Last September President Reagan suggested a plan for a Jordanian-Palestinian federation with a large measure of Palestinian self-rule. Since then the Administration has hoped—and a large segment of the media has grasped at straws to imply—that the P.L.O. might accept this proposal. The current government of Israel opposes all these ideas, but President Reagan hopes to induce Prime Minister Begin to change his policy.

The result of the convention of the P.N.C., the P.L.O.'s parliamentary body, was both a clear-cut political victory for Yasir Arafat and a reminder of just how narrow is his room for maneuvering. The Reagan plan was rejected, and resolutions discouraged a proposed negotiating tactic to circumvent P.L.O.-Israel mutual nonrecognition—the creation of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation in which West Bank independents would represent the Palestinians, but take orders from P.L.O. headquarters.

Observers have often overestimated Arafat's courage or ability to change P.L.O. policy, given the caution bred by his constant struggle to mollify P.L.O. factions and Arab regimes that use money, competing militancy, and even assassination in attempts to control the organization. Arafat's own weapons include cagey ambiguity in political positions and consensus above all. These tools have served him well, but also block any moving away of the P.L.O. from a maximalist and rejectionist stance.

There are thus two ironies in the P.L.O.'s politics. First, the very policies that preserve the organization also freeze it into self-defeating negativism. Second, Arafat's strong position as leader is best protected by minimum use of his potential leverage. With time no longer on its side and deprived of its base in Lebanon, the P.L.O. may well find such flaws fatal.

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Certainly the P.L.O. has brought pride to the Palestinians and international recognition of their cause, but Arafat and his colleagues must now decide whether to remain forever leaders of the P.L.O. or to try to become rulers of a part of Palestine. The latter alternative requires eventually dealing not only with the United States but with Israel as well. If Begin is not prepared to negotiate, then it is in the P.L.O.'s interest to strengthen an Israeli lobby for accommodation, and to convince the United States to pressure Israel. But the P.L.O. has proved unable to make more than halfhearted public relations gestures, which both the United States and Israel find inadequate.

The P.L.O. was traumatized by the Israeli military victory in Lebanon and by the failure of Arab states to do much about it. P.N.C. chairman Khalid al-Fahum said at the meeting, "The Arab silence around the besieged revolution and around the people who were exposed to extinction was overwhelming and heartless." In the disappointed words of Issam Sartawi, the P.L.O.'s main advocate for recognition of Israel (who quit the P.N.C. in despair over the P.L.O.'s inflexibility): "We hoped that the tragic experience . . . would make us wake up and revise the path of defeat which led to such results. Unfortunately, we must say that the path of defeat which paved the way for the Lebanese tragedy is still living in the minds of some of our brothers."

IN LEBANON THE P.L.O. lost its state-within-a-state, which allowed it to govern about 300,000 Palestinians there and to launch attacks on Israel. P.L.O. forces have now been scattered to a number of Arab countries, where the governments will be more able to control them. The war also cost the organization's treasury $350 to $400 million. With oil revenues declining in Arab states—many of whom do not fulfill their pledges anyway—and with P.L.O. expenses increasing, and Palestinian institutions and recruitment disrupted, the P.L.O. is in a far weaker position than it was a year ago.

As Aaron Miller notes in a forthcoming book, *The P.L.O. and the Politics of Survival*, Arafat's Al-Fatah "has emerged from the Lebanese debacle with more authority and prestige than any other P.L.O. group." If the P.L.O. claims to be the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinians, Arafat and Fatah, with roughly 70 percent of the P.L.O.'s fighters, can increasingly claim to be the sole legitimate leadership. Arafat began concerted talks with Jordan's King Hussein about the possibilities of cooperation. Hussein himself is extremely conscious of the dangers of Arab inaction. Israel, he said, "is in the last stages of swallowing up the land."

Yet in addition to the complaints of the smaller P.L.O. groups and of other Arab nations—most ardently Jordan's enemy, Syria—the underlying conflict between Hussein and Arafat endangers real cooperation. Jordanians are genuinely eager for peace with Israel. In fact, they are so desirous of some kind of settlement that leaves them in control of the West Bank that they gloss over serious problems. Without noting any contradiction, they claim that the relationship between Jordan and a West Bank-Gaza entity will be like the total Jordanian control that existed before 1967, or a federation dominated by Amman, or a looser equal partnership, or a de facto Palestinian state. The P.L.O. prefers the last option, and advocates the concept of "confederation," which Arafat adviser Hani al-Hassan defines as "two states, bound by a treaty." This last option, quite at odds with President Reagan's peace plan, was the one adopted by the P.N.C. meeting.

To ensure a two-thirds majority among the 300 P.N.C. delegates at the meeting, Arafat packed the gathering with about 75 new delegates, including 25 Fatah military commanders, although the convention refused a proposal to add a number of women's delegates. Arafat simply expelled—under what P.N.C. regulation it is not clear—Nimr Saleh, a pro-Syrian Fatah leader who had criticized his policies.

IN LIGHT OF THIS BALANCE and Arafat's charismatic authority, the smaller groups knew that they could only shape, but not sway, the results. Their base was also eroded by the continuing decline of the Syrian-sponsored Al-Saiqa, once the second largest P.L.O. group, whose prestige has fallen with that of Damascus. Yet Arafat's opponents did not do as badly as most observers seem to think. The two main opposition groups today are the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (P.F.L.P.), led by George Habash, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (D.F.L.P.), led by Nayif Hawatmeh. These groups also influence a significant "left" faction within Fatah, which would never dream of bucking Arafat's leadership, but which sees itself as guardian of a hard-line stance and as defender of the P.L.O.'s alliance with the Syrians and Soviets.

In the past the D.F.L.P. has supported Arafat at critical moments and sometimes its ideas have been adopted by the P.L.O. The D.F.L.P. originated the concept of the "secular democratic state" to replace Israel and later developed a formula for a two-stage strategy to eliminate the Jewish state. This latter approach was implicitly accepted by the P.N.C. in 1974, with its first step being establishment of "a national authority on any liberated territory." In the West this position was sometimes seen as a sign of moderation, but a goal of establishing a Palestinian base for further offensives was scarcely comforting to the Israeli government.

Habash called the Reagan plan a "political bomb no different from the cluster bombs which our fighters confronted bravely in Beirut." Hawatmeh rejected "all forms of trusteeship," a code word for the Jordanian framework, and rejected the Reagan plan as an "imperialist American-Zionist plan" though Israel had also rejected the proposal.

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Fahum and Arafat themselves sketched out, in milder but equally determined language, the reasons why the Reagan plan was unacceptable to the P.L.O. They scorned it for disregarding refugees' "right to return" to what is now Israel, self-determination, establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital, and recognition of the P.L.O. as its sole legitimate representative. These four points all concern major issues; the Reagan plan cannot be adjusted to meet them.

Thus the P.N.C. political resolution rejected the U.S. proposal in fairly clear language: "Reagan's plan, in style and content, does not respect the established national rights of the Palestinian people. . . . Therefore, the P.N.C. rejects the considering of this plan as a sound basis for the just and lasting solution of the cause of the Palestine and the Arab-Zionist conflict." Fatah leader Salah Khalif said in his speech—not quoted in the U.S. press—"I have not heard a single Palestinian say that he accepted Reagan's plan."

THE P.N.C. TOOK a more favorable position on a confederation with Jordan, which Arafat even defended as an expression of Arab unity. But there was no question of accepting domination from Amman. The resolution called for "a confederation between two independent states." "Our people shall live in their homeland, free and as masters," said Arafat. The P.N.C. was suspicious about allowing the Jordanians or West Bank mayors to negotiate with the Americans or Israelis. The P.N.C. final resolution called for: "Rejection of all schemes aimed at harming the right of the P.L.O. to be the sole representative of the Palestinian people through any formula such as assigning powers, acting on its behalf, or sharing its right of representation."

If the P.L.O. does change course, the Arab regimes will have a great deal to do with it. Despite Syria's negativism, the majority of involved Arab governments favor some accommodation with Israel for the first time in history. Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and even Iraq take this "moderate" position. The Saudis, however, have been quite timid, even by their standards, in trying to influence the P.L.O. Their Fez summit resolution, endorsed by the P.N.C. meeting, called for an independent Palestinian state in all the occupied territories with only the vaguest offer of recognition for Israel. So far they have not offered much encouragement to Reagan's efforts.

The P.L.O.'s anti-Americanism remains particularly strident. As P.L.O. spokesmen repeatedly stress, the United States is Israel's main supplier of arms and aid, while U.S. guarantees to protect Palestinians in West Beirut proved worthless in the Sabra and Shatila massacres. Arafat's closing oration portrayed Lebanon as a P.L.O. victory, and blamed setbacks on United States involvement. Washington received no thanks for saving the P.L.O. leadership and troops in West Beirut from complete destruction. In Arafat's words, Ambassador Philip Habib and President Reagan decided "to destroy the foundation of the P.L.O." He even claimed, "The U.S. 6th fleet . . . was the one that carried out the Israeli military landings. . . . " But things in Lebanon were not really so bad: "They speak of this invincible [Israeli] army. But, brothers, by God I have not found it invincible. . . . I wish all my nation was with me to see the feebleness of this army."

SUCH RHETORIC is aimed at building morale, but it also shapes thinking. P.L.O. strategy is still tied to positions based on illusion or internal politics. Reporters and commentators like to suggest that the failure of the P.L.O. or of Jordan to accept the Reagan plan results from a lack of U.S. credibility and an inability to bring rapid Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon or a settlement freeze on the West Bank. But aside from the misdeeds of the Begin government, the fact is that the P.L.O. has principled differences with American objectives and the Jordanians are hard put to join in without an Arab mandate or P.L.O. acquiescence. The P.L.O. only offers Hussein the unattractive option of risking a great deal to establish a P.L.O.-led state. Unless the Arab side can produce a better offer, Washington will have no incentive to put pressure on Israel, and the creeping annexation of the West Bank will continue.

This consideration weighs heavily on King Hussein, and the Reagan Administration expresses great optimism about his willingness to enter negotiations with Israel. Such a decision, which would have to come very soon, would be a historic breakthrough regardless of preconditions. If he were unable to stop the King, Arafat might feel compelled to keep a hand in the resulting talks by sending along such trusted West Bank mayors as Muhammad Milhelm and Fahd Kawasmeh, and braving any storm within the P.L.O.

Still, the P.N.C. meeting marked another step in the P.L.O.'s creation of its own new consensus. The P.L.O. has at last apparently accepted the goal of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel rather than its original program—continued even with the post-1974 euphemisms—for Israel's complete destruction. P.N.C. chairman Fahum argued that the P.L.O. "wants to destroy no state, nor push anyone into the sea," but, equally, the Palestinians "do not want to be destroyed, nor forced into the desert." Arafat exclaimed, "We do not fight for the sake of fighting and do not reject for the sake of rejection." There has been a P.L.O. trend toward a more realistic position, but it has been agonizingly slow. Perhaps it will be too late.

BARRY RUBIN

Barry Rubin is a senior fellow at Georgetown University Center for Strategic and International Studies and author of *The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict* (Syracuse University Press).

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President Reagan inspires a killer backlash.

The Gang That Can't Deregulate

By Mark Green

ALL REAGANOMICS is divided into four parts, three of which (tax cuts, budget cuts, and tight money) we have heard much about. But until the Environmental Protection Agency began self-immolating, little attention was paid to the fourth part: deregulation. This was certainly not for the Administration's lack of trying. President Reagan entered the White House determined, among other things, to overhaul all those regulatory agencies he had denounced for three decades as a threat to personal freedom and economic growth. David Stockman's famous "Economic Dunkirk" memo urged "a dramatic, substantial recision of the regulatory burden"; within 48 hours of taking the oath of office, Reagan created the Presidential Task Force on Regulatory Relief, chaired by Vice President George Bush; a week later, the task force suspended nearly two hundred "midnight regulations" proposed late in the Carter Administration; and on February 17 the President issued an executive order requiring that proposed regulations pass a cost-benefit test. In late 1981, *The Washington Post* ran a World War II size headline: U.S. DISMANTLING CONSUMER PROGRAMS.

But two years after its opening burst, Reagan's deregulatory jihad must be judged a short-term success and long-term failure. There is no question that the Administration has slowed the advance of federal regulation by making antiregulatory appointments, shrinking regulatory agency budgets, reducing information disclosure, weakening enforcement, and simply refusing to propose or approve new pending regulations. At the same time, however, the Administration has failed to significantly deregulate Washington. This is the nearly unanimous conclusion on both sides in the regulatory debate. "The Administration has fumbled the ball," says James Carty, regulatory affairs director of the National Association of Manufacturers. "They've blown it." George Eads of the Rand Corporation says, "They have stopped issuing and enforcing regulations, but they haven't attacked the basis for regulation." "They hurt their cause," adds Marvin Kosters of the American Enterprise Institute. And Simon Lazarus III, who worked on regulatory issues in Jimmy Carter's White House, says, "It's incredible that with a Republican Senate, business groups up in arms, and a committed Administration, they've achieved so little."

What went wrong? Administration deregulators, as so many of Reagan's top appointments, overreached and produced a backlash that now hamstrings them in the agencies, in the courts, and in Congress.

The reaction began well before the troubles at E.P.A., with symbols such as the Task Force on Regulatory Relief, which confessed in its title that its goal was to help business, not consumers. And the White House's selection of appointees known for hostility to the purpose of their agencies approached the contemptuous. Armand Hammer, head of Hooker Chemical's parent corporation, was named to head a Presidential advisory committee on cancer. John McKetta, a lobbyist against the Clean Air Act, served on an interagency Acid Preparation Task Force, despite his observation that "grass and trees in my backyard" pollute more than his car. Other appointees have contended that ketchup is a vegetable and that bribery in trucking is simply the free market at work. At the Federal Trade Commission, chairman James Miller III said that "imperfect products should be available because consumers have different preferences for defect avoidance"—which translated from the original Darwin means that poorer consumers should be allowed to buy dangerous products since they can't afford better in a free market. One of Miller's economists recently recommended against recalling six thousand defective survival suits, arguing that the families of victims should instead sue for compensation. A disbelieving Representative Al Gore said: "Some screwball thought market forces could be defined as lawsuits by widows and orphans."

Anne Burford at E.P.A., Nancy Steorts at the Consumer Product Safety Commission, and John Shad at the Securities and Exchange Commission also made serious tactical mistakes from the start. Burford and Steorts showed open contempt for professionals in their agencies. One of Steorts's first acts was to spend almost $10,000 to decorate her office at the same time her agency received a 25 percent budget cut. Shad, a major fundraiser for Reagan on Wall Street, gave a $1,000 campaign contribution to New York Senator Alfonse D'Amato after D'Amato became chairman of the sub-

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committee overseeing the S.E.C. Then he opposed the prosecution of Citibank for its alleged evasion of foreign tax and currency laws, arguing that management never said it would act with honesty and integrity, so it didn't have to disclose breaches of those standards. The S.E.C.'s enforcement chief, John Fedders, meanwhile, has announced a policy of not going after fraudulent practices that don't "materially" affect the company's financial performance.

Reagan appointees obviously misread the 1980 election as a mandate for wholesale regulatory dismantling, but poll results indicate fundamental support for consumer and environmental regulation. A recent Harris survey indicates that 88 percent of Americans want the Clean Air Act kept intact or strengthened. When people were asked if they would still want the act enforced if jobs were threatened, they said yes by a margin of 78 percent to 17 percent. *Public Opinion* magazine found that only 9 percent of the public wants worker-safety regulations reduced, 32 percent wants them as they are, and 59 percent wants them strengthened.

Whatever its periodic errors or excesses, federal environmental and consumer regulation has worked, and the regulation is needed. Product safety standards on cribs and bottle caps have cut infant deaths from crib strangulation and ingestion of poisons or pills by 50 percent. The Clean Air Act has created 200,000 jobs and has provided $21.4 billion worth of economic and health benefits annually. Federal auto and traffic regulations have prevented approximately 100,000 deaths from automobile accidents. Reaganite anecdotes about the evils of big government are less effective following word that Oraflex, approved by the Food and Drug Administration as part of its expedited new drug approval process, has been associated with 61 deaths in Great Britain.

The antideregulation backlash has now been joined by Republicans and business people as well as consumer and environmental activists. The National Wildlife Federation, two-thirds of whose members voted for Reagan, publicly urged that he fire Interior Secretary James Watt. Exxon and Bacardi, companies that spent large sums meeting E.P.A. water standards, expressed annoyance when those standards were eased—"rewarding companies that failed to comply," one businessman said. An early OSHA proposal to do away with labeling of hazardous workplace chemicals upset chemical industry lobbyists who feared they soon would be facing "fifty little E.P.A.s and OSHAs" in the states. When E.P.A. suffered extensive budget cuts, impairing its ability to develop timely and intelligent regulations, Geraldine V. Cox of the Chemical Manufacturers Association complained that "if E.P.A. can't operate, we can't either."

The backlash now is limiting President Reagan's declared goal of reducing the level of regulation—administratively, judicially, and legislatively. The regulatory agencies themselves are pulling back from announced changes. Former Health and Human Services Secretary Richard Schweiker planned to lower requirements for nursing home certification and inspection, but after Republican Senator John Heinz announced the proposal had "just about zero support," Schweiker withdrew it. Thorne Auchter at OSHA announced that safety inspectors' promotion chances would be partly based on employers' evaluations, which of course could make inspectors more obsequious than observant. Labor complained, and the policy ended. After Interior Secretary James Watt began oil and gas leasing in a New Mexico wilderness area in late 1981, public opposition caused the House Interior Committee to make him stop.

The most frequent about-faces have occurred at E.P.A. Without hearings or public comment, the agency announced in February 1982 that it was suspending a ban on liquid wastes in landfills. There was an immediate public and Congressional revolt, which included Representative Guy Molinari, a conservative Republican from New York City. "Even as we meet here," he declared at an E.P.A. hearing, "the trucks are rolling into nine hundred landfills all over America carrying a deadly legacy that our children and our grandchildren will have no choice but to accept." Within three weeks E.P.A. reinstated the ban. Also in February 1982, the agency proposed to abolish or weaken limits on the amount of lead in gasoline; this would increase the amount of lead in the air, which is especially dangerous to children. Six months later, E.P.A. was forced to

CARTOON BY BEN SARGENT

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reverse itself, and proposed to strengthen the standard. After balking for months, the agency issued regulations that schools be inspected for loose asbestos and that toxic waste facility operators have the financial resources to safely maintain a site after it has been closed.

IN THE COURTS the Administration has suffered a series of setbacks because its zealous antiregulators ignored legal standards. In April 1981 OSHA tried to get the Supreme Court to stop considering a case involving cotton dust standards for textile workers. The Administration wanted to subject the standards to cost-benefit analysis, but the Court ruled that it wasn't legal. Justice William Brennan declared that the health of workers outweighs "all other considerations" and that Congress intended compliance to be "part of the cost of doing business." In another major test case, the State Farm Mutual Insurance Company sued Reagan's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration for abolishing the passive restraint (or so-called "air bag") rule. Judge Abner Mikva, writing for a unanimous U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia, called N.H.T.S.A.'s action "arbitrary and unlawful." He said that the agency "seems to conclude that because some technology will not meet the passive restraint standard, it need not mandate compliance by technology that will. The absurdity of this Orwellian reasoning is obvious." N.H.T.S.A. has appealed to the Supreme Court.

Recently Public Citizen and other groups sued the Food and Drug Administration, claiming that it had gutted infant formula regulations because of pressure from industry. Plaintiffs disclosed an F.D.A. memorandum in which an agency attorney admitted that the regulations were so altered as to be "hardly recognizable," and that "the agency would probably lose a court challenge"; an F.D.A. spokesman later confirmed that the regulations were extensively rewritten to satisfy industry complaints.

Of all the agencies, E.P.A. has the worst judicial record. It has lost at least four major cases since Anne Burford became Administrator, three times to the National Resources Defense Fund alone. For example, in June 1982, the U.S. Court of Appeals in Philadelphia said the agency had acted illegally when it suspended federal rules on toxic waste discharges, and ordered the regulation retroactively reinstituted. The next month, the Court of Appeals in the District of Columbia ruled that E.P.A. had illegally loosened air pollution rules to help industries expand in areas that don't yet meet federal clean air standards. In all of these, courts found that the Administration had neither law nor scientific evidence to back its action.

Reagan's efforts to dismantle regulation legislatively have also failed miserably, and there is no reason to think he'll do any better in the more liberal 98th Congress. Early in Reagan's term, the Office of Management and Budget tried to persuade Congress to move the only agency with the word "consumer" in it, the Consumer Product Safety Commission, into the Commerce Department, the government's business advocacy agency. In the end, the proposal failed. Nor could O.M.B. coax the Senate to end the antitrust authority of the F.T.C., a move strongly opposed by Republican Senators John Danforth of Missouri and Slade Gorton of Washington. The two biggest legislative defeats for Reagan's deregulators were the Clean Air Act revisions and the "Regulatory Reform Bill." After much puffing, the Administration never even introduced its own Clean Air bill, settling instead for a mushy list of "principles" in mid-1981 that soon became legislatively irrelevant. The bill, which basically attempted to codify Reagan's cost-benefit principles and apply them to the independent regulatory agencies, passed the Senate 95 to 0, but stalled in the House during the lame-duck session, when many committee chairmen, led by John Dingell, objected to it in a Rules Committee session.

CONSERVATIVES bravely talk about cooking up a new batch of deregulation measures in the 98th Congress. They intend to reintroduce legislation on clean air and regulatory reform, to weaken the standard on carcinogens in food, and to allow OSHA to do cost-benefit analyses. But the problems that thwarted them in the 97th Congress persist. The biggest Congressional problem is hostility toward appointees such as Anne Burford and James Watt, whom one legislator has called "the Bonnie and Clyde of the environment." George Eads of Rand concurs. He says that the Reaganites have "destroyed for a decade the ability to think about reform in a nonpartisan way. You can't talk intelligently about changing the Clean Air Act because the first question is how Anne [Burford] will enforce it. And that's the end of the discussion." The dioxin disaster at Times Beach, Missouri, and the obvious popularity of environmental issues in polls, i.e., the so-called "green" vote, have exacerbated the Congressional reaction. This confluence has noticeably shifted the axis of regulatory debate in Congress. One now hears more of "toxic time bombs" than of "overregulation."

At the same time, the deregulators to some extent have been abandoned by their own political leaders. President Reagan, for all his talk, has expended nowhere near as much of his personal political capital on behalf of deregulatory measures as on his tax and budget programs. As Christopher Demuth of O.M.B. somewhat defensively explained it, "No President spends much time on regulatory matters." (Of course, no other President blamed regulation for our economic decline and fall, either.) The President's lack of wholehearted support cut the steam behind the regulatory reform bill, and annoyed James Carty, head of regulatory affairs at the National Association of Manufacturers. "We've been working on this thing for four years," he complained in his office recently. "We had the thing greased to go in 1981. If they had jumped on it early, it would be law today. Instead, the White House had lower echelon

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people working on it. Legislatively, they've flunked."

All the Administration's deregulatory problems—incompetence, Congressional revolt, legal constraints—have surfaced in its implementation of President Reagan's executive order that requires executive agencies to prepare cost-benefit analyses for all "major" regulations unless it is specifically precluded by statute. It demands that benefits exceed costs before a regulation can be promulgated, and puts O.M.B. in charge of compliance with the order. Lengthy studies by the Library of Congress, the House Energy and Commerce Committee, and the Alliance for Justice conclude that O.M.B. implementation of the executive order is probably an unlawful usurpation of agency regulatory authority. They also assert that O.M.B.'s review authority permits unhappy businesses to seek political help in the White House, of which O.M.B. is a part. As Representative Al Gore of Tennessee asserted in a Congressional hearing:

> I think it was no accident that only 30 days after a secret meeting between O.M.B. and the Chemical Manufacturers Association, the hazardous waste disposal regulations were ordered by O.M.B. to be reviewed . . . that shortly after a secret meeting between the Air Transport Association and the O.M.B., air carrier certification rules were designated for review by O.M.B. . . . that shortly after a secret meeting between O.M.B. and the American Mining Congress, the Interior Department's rule on extraction of coal was postponed indefinitely.

In a speech to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, C. Boyden Gray, the counsel for George Bush's Task Force on Regulatory Relief, went so far as to invite political intervention:

> If you go to the agency first, don't be too pessimistic if they can't solve the problem there. If they don't, that's what the task force is for. Two weeks ago [a group] showed up and I asked if they had a problem. They said they did, and we made a couple of phone calls and straightened it out, alerted the top people at the agency that there was a little hanky-panky going on at the bottom of the agency, and it was cleared up very rapidly—so the system does work if you use it as a sort of an appeal. You can act as a double check on the agency that you might encounter problems with.

This approach undermines the theory of administrative decisionmaking by encouraging a secret political review of what should be an on-the-record decision. As Washington lawyer Joan Z. Bernstein put it, "It has been nonfacetiously suggested that the lawyer who does not argue all the way to Vice President Bush may be subjecting himself to a malpractice charge. . . . I, for one, have already put the Vice President's number on my rolodex."

As for the executive order's cost-benefit test, agencies in the Reagan Administration actually appear more likely to apply a "cost-cost" test. Critics such as Representative Henry Waxman of California persuasively charge that because businesses control cost data, because benefit data (lives saved, injuries prevented, etc.) barely exist, because the long-range effects of many pollutants can't currently be measured, and because no formula can quantify value judgments like equity, strict cost-benefit tests are, in the words of a 1981 House Government Operations Committee report, "simply too primitive a tool to make a decisive factor in rulemaking." The O.M.B. form entitled "Regulatory Docket Worksheet," which requires agencies to summarize information about a proposed regulation, has lines for entering all sorts of costs—"Federal Cost Impact," "Compliance Cost Impact," "Affected Public," "Consultations"—but there is no space at all for "Potential Benefits." And in an interview, O.M.B.'s Chris DeMuth acknowledged that "you can't really quantify benefits." But if you won't or can't estimate benefits, all the Administration's talk about cost-benefit analysis can't be anything but a hoax.

GEORGE BUSH'S task force claims that no less than $70 billion will be saved over a decade due to its deregulation program. But this number is based largely on data supplied by regulated businesses themselves. And it assumes that repealed regulations had *zero* benefit—that, for example, passive restraints would save no lives, even though experts concur that they would avoid 90,000 deaths and 600,000 serious injuries over a decade. Other agencies disagree. In the summer of 1981, O.M.B. estimated Administration deregulatory savings at $15 billion to $18 billion, but a year later, the number had fallen to $9 billion to $11 billion. Under Congressional questioning, F.T.C. chairman Jim Miller admitted that it was "conceivable" that later benefit studies could shrink the $9 billion to $11 billion to zero or negative, meaning that benefits would *exceed* costs.

Two years after launching its assault on the regulatory state, the Administration has run out of gas and credibility. And the Reaganites seem to know it. "It's slower than I thought it would be," C. Boyden Gray told *Newsday*. "I think we made a mistake earlier about creating expectations. The rhetoric always gets ahead of you. . . . There isn't much power in the White House—not as much as the public thinks." At a recent business conference, Gray blamed the Administration's lack of success on powerful environmentalists and a press that "slants the issues." In one sense, Gray is right. Were it not for citizen groups litigating, the press exposing, and members of Congress probing, Reagan's deregulators might have succeeded in scuttling health and safety law enforcement. But when such critics threw the spotlight of scrutiny on the Administration, it blinked and faltered.

After all the foxy appointees, mismanagement, lost court cases, administrative about-faces, and legislative rejections—not to mention the incompetence, conflicts, and sweetheart settlements at E.P.A.—the Administration did it to itself. As F.T.C. commissioner Michael Pertschuk says, they're "the gang that couldn't deregulate straight."

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Andreas Papandreou is a one-man Greek drama.

NATO's Bad Boy

By Ronald Steel

Athens

HE PROMISED, before his election as Prime Minister a year ago last October, to yank Greece out of NATO and shut down the American military bases unless he got a deal on Greece's terms. He would also, he pledged, bring the blessings of Socialism to a country that still has one foot in the preindustrial world. He would modernize Greece, break the hold of foreign exploiters and the local oligarchy, and cut loose from the rival military blocs of the cold war. Change was his promise, and change his campaign slogan: *allaghi*. Under that banner Andreas Papandreou, bad boy of NATO and scourge of conservatives, ushered in a new era in Greek politics.

DRAWING BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Papandreou is a charismatic man who inspires devotion among his followers and admiration for his intellect, even among detractors. His party could never have come to power without him, and would almost surely disintegrate in his absence. He exudes charm and, when he chooses, a reasonableness that disarms skeptical foreign visitors. Friend and foe alike describe him as a spellbinding orator, able to work a crowd like Demosthenes. Whatever one's final judgment of this complex man, he is an impressive character. It is easy to understand why the Greeks, who enjoy a little theater in their lives and love a strong man who stands up to foreigners, decided to let him have a chance. At the very least he makes politics interesting.

Papandreou is something between a politician and a godfather. On his return from exile in 1974, after the collapse of the military dictatorship that overthrew Greek democracy in 1967, he created a party in his own image. He called it Pasok, short for the Panhellenic Socialist Movement. He might more accurately have named it after himself, as did his father, who actually did lead something called the George Papandreou Party. To say that Andreas rules Pasok with an iron fist would be an understatement. He is the party, and members can be kicked out at his whim—as an elected deputy recently was. To say that he has surrounded himself with sycophants and punishes anyone of independent views would be more accurate. The cafés of the fashionable Kolonaki district of Athens echo to the grumbling of ex-Pasok militants.

In 1974 Pasok—that is to say, Papandreou—took 14 percent of the vote; in the multiparty 1981 elections it captured 48 percent and a clear majority in the Parliament. Not only did Papandreou rout the center and the right, but he did so without relying on the Communists. Unlike François Mitterrand in France, he owes the Communists nothing and rewarded them with nothing. In this way his victory helped ease the polarization of Greek politics, for ever since the end of World War II the Communists had been the most vocal source of opposition to the military-backed rightists who usually ruled the country.

The Communist stranglehold on the left goes back to the German occupation, when the resistance movement was mostly Communist-led. During the civil war that

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followed liberation from the Germans, the center virtually disappeared. The monarchy—with the help of the British, then of the Americans after 1947 as part of the Truman Doctrine—defeated the Communist-led left, and for the next twenty years ruled mostly through right-wing politicians in alliance with the military. The King continually intervened in politics. When in 1967 he had trouble controlling Andreas's father, he forced the elder Papandreou out of office. Lower level army officers then took over—a gang of right-wing thugs who ruled by intimidation and reduced the king to a figurehead. Andreas, as a minister in his father's government, was jailed and then forced into exile. He went to Canada, and returned in 1974, after the collapse of the junta, to organize Pasok and prepare his accession to power.

ONLY IN THE CONTEXT of Greek politics, where harsh memories of the civil war have polarized society between left and right, would Andreas seem a radical. In effect, he is merely a moderate Socialist on the model of Olof Palme or Willy Brandt, and could fit with equal ease into the Democratic Party in the United States. His platform to raise wages for peasants and workers, build hospitals and schools, cut the bureaucracy, invest in growth industries, break up monopolies, and aid small business is the classic stuff of the New Deal.

Papandreou may be a moderate at heart, but there is nonetheless a touch of the demagogue about him. During the campaign he effectively played on Greek resentment at being pushed around by foreigners, particularly the Americans. Many Greeks, with some reason, blame the United States for giving the green light to the colonels' coup in 1967, for supporting the military junta during the seven years of its dictatorship, and for winking at Turkey's invasion of Cyprus in 1974 and allowing the Turks to occupy a third of the island. Papandreou promised to restore Greece's control of its own destiny. If the blueprint was vague, the accusations were specific, and many Greeks thrilled to Papandreou's daring, even though they did not necessarily subscribe to his prescriptions.

Papandreou promised a lot, both at home and abroad. His ability to deliver on either front is sharply limited by forces over which he has little control. Even before his election he was backing away from his pledge to pull Greece out of NATO, and it is clear that he has no intention of doing so. Nor would many Greeks want him to. But Greeks have a history of being pushed around, and are convinced that most of their troubles are the fault of foreigners. They love having a Prime Minister who pushes back. At NATO meetings Papandreou can be a terrible nuisance: passing around accusations of Turkish violations of Greek air space, blocking NATO maneuvers in the Aegean because of a dispute over a Greek island off the Turkish coast, and demanding that NATO force Turkey to withdraw its troops from Cyprus.

Naturally this is annoying, particularly to American officials who have tended to take Greece for granted. By being a nuisance—making demands, voicing objections, threatening withdrawal—Papandreou is exercising the only effective power of the weak. Even Greeks who don't like his policies are pleased by the attention that Greece gets from the United States and its Common Market partners. They just don't want to push assertion to the point of political isolation. Neither does Papandreou. This is why he has cooled his rhetoric considerably since he became Prime Minister.

"Do you still think that Greece should pull out of NATO?" I asked him during a recent conversation. "What we feel is that the division of Europe into two blocs has to come to an end sometime," he responded in the professorial manner he adopts for interviewers. "Yalta and Potsdam cannot rule the lives of many generations." Fair enough, but should Greece take the first step by pulling out of the Western military bloc? No, not for now. "Our participation in the alliance is not consistent with our vision of a Europe free of blocs," he explained. "But our government does have to respond to concrete realities and to the structure of power."

CONCRETE REALITIES. Structure of power. In translation that means that Greece will stay within NATO and eventually negotiate a new lease on the four American military bases. Papandreou can't say so directly, since his left-wing supporters already complain that he isn't as radical as they thought. So he equivocates, inveighing against the rival military blocs, but remaining firmly within the Western one. Is this hypocritical? Probably. But it does reflect, as Papandreou observes, a concrete reality.

Even his "no" must be equivocal. Without the United States, Greece has nowhere to go. If Papandreou were to push the Americans out of Greek bases, they would jump across the Aegean and happily settle down in Turkey. That, of course, is the last thing he wants. He needs the U.S. connection to balance off the Turks. He knows it, and so does Washington. This is why an agreement on the bases is likely, after some hair-splitting on both sides, to save face. The Americans want to stay, and Papandreou is willing to let them, so long as he gets something in return to appease his leftist supporters.

Athens and Ankara have been arguing over territory and rights ever since Greece gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire in 1823. Today the feud focuses on Cyprus and the Aegean islands. In 1960 Cyprus, which is 80 percent Greek, became independent —not because anybody thought independence made any sense, but because neither country wanted it to fall into the hands of the other. After a clumsy attempt by the Greek military junta to seize control of the island in 1974, the Turkish army moved into the northern third of Cyprus and has been there ever since.

There is no easy solution to the Cyprus problem,

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especially since Greece and Turkey continually interfere in the island's politics. But it is a useful vehicle for politicians in both countries, and Papandreou has his foot on the accelerator. The Turks make superb villains, and no Greek politician has ever lost a vote for damning them as knaves and barbarians. Skillfully evoking the image of the bloodthirsty Turk, Papandreou has accused Ankara of wanting not only to take over Cyprus, but to gain control of the Greek islands off Turkey's shores. The Turks, in turn, charge that Greece, by trying to extend the territorial waters of the Greek islands dotting the Aegean, is intent on turning the entire Aegean Sea into a Greek lake.

Much of the quarrel between Greece and Turkey seems petty and absurd to an outside observer. But this is the stuff that wars are made of, and it would be a mistake not to take the imbroglio seriously. At any time it could escalate—through demagoguery, fear, and bravado—into a confrontation that neither side wants but both might be powerless to avert. Both sides have contributed to the escalation of rhetoric, but following Papandreou's call for a moratorium, tempers have temporarily cooled.

The Cyprus issue complicates relations between Greece and Turkey. Papandreou is often at odds with the President of Cyprus, Spyros Kyprianou, a colorless conservative who last month was re-elected to power only because of a devil's pact with the powerful Cypriot Communist Party. Papandreou, having locked the Communists out of his government, does not want to give them an opening by endorsing Kyprianou's cynical alliance.

PAPANDREOU needs a few distractions from Greece's economic dilemmas, and nothing is so useful as a foreign menace. As such menaces go, the Turks are much better than the Americans, who are both far away and have relatives in every Greek household. The government would just as soon not have too much attention focused on the economy, and especially on some of Papandreou's pre-election pledges. Though the Greeks elected a Socialist government in 1981, and gave it a vote of confidence in last fall's municipal elections, Socialism is still quite a ways down the pike in Greece.

Papandreou, an economist by training and a Socialist by conviction, came into office with a Fabian shopping list: modernize the economy, build hospitals and schools for the poor, raise workers' salaries, break up monopolies, organize farm co-ops. It was not long before he ran into the worldwide recession and the ingrained structural defects of the Greek economy. Because of the global oil glut, hundreds of Greek tankers lie idle in harbor. Instead of earning $2 billion this year in shipping revenues, as expected, Greece will take in barely half that amount. Raising wages for the poor has complicated efforts to bring down inflation—at 25 percent when he took office, and now at 21 percent.

Reluctantly, he has reined in his economic program. Many of the new hospitals and schools remain on the drawing board, and some of the workers' benefits will have to be taken back. In January he devalued the Greek drachma by 15 percent, a move that won the applause of businessmen (since it lowers the price of Greek exports) and angered leftists. This austerity has not gone down well with the workers who form the core of Papandreou's movement, and has given the restive Communist Party an opportunity to undercut the government from the left. Recently the party denounced Papandreou for "reformism" and for an economic policy that "objectively serves the general plans of the ruling classes and harms the cause of change."

SO FAR Papandreou has easily managed to stave off this attack from the left—partly by an ultranationalistic foreign policy. But if economic conditions worsen, his support could begin to erode. Thus Papandreou has tried to emphasize that Socialism does not necessarily mean abundance. "What we're trying to create here is not just a social welfare state, but one in which the major decisions are made by the people," he told me in tones that eerily echo Ronald Reagan. "We oppose any kind of centralized bureaucratic planning. For us 'Socialism' means the transfer of power from the all-powerful, all-stifling state to the people."

In this regard he has broken the stranglehold of the government-appointed provincial prefects (nomarchs) on local government. Under the impetus of his American-born wife, and his minister of culture, actress Melina Mercouri, he has legalized civil marriage and banned the custom that made it difficult for women to marry unless they brought dowries to their prospective husbands. He has tried to set up farm cooperatives, create a rudimentary national health service, and scale back a bloated civil service bureaucracy. He has succeeded in lowering the voting age to 18 and ending film censorship. He has even opened the state-controlled radio-TV network to views other than those of government officials. His efforts to elevate public discourse, however, have been less successful. When American soap operas were replaced on government TV by dreary roundtable discussions, viewers rose up in rebellion.

These overdue social reforms have helped ease the pressure Papandreou was under for his inability to work an economic miracle. And most importantly for Greece's depleted treasury, they don't cost a drachma. He recently made another gesture to the left by accelerating the repatriation of the remaining 35,000 Greek political refugees living in Communist countries. These refugees, including their foreign-born children, are the survivors of the civil war of 1944-1947 that split Greece into rival right-wing and Communist camps. They fled, after the royalist victory, across the border to Iron Curtain countries. By such gestures, Papandreou hopes to win Communist support for his economic austerity program.

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Papandreou has tried to ward off the danger of a military coup by bribing the army with weapons and benefits, wooing it with patriotic speeches, and thrilling it with fiery denunciations of the Turks. He has also sought to control it by jealously guarding the key portfolio of defense minister for himself. His balancing act is agile, but not without risks. There are still right-wing elements in the military that mutter about another coup. These officers, like many Greek conservatives, were particularly irritated by last month's visit to Athens of Soviet Prime Minister Nikolai Tikhonov, and even more by Papandreou's support for recent Soviet peace initiatives.

Even with the army under wraps, Papandreou faces other dangers. His taunting of Turkey could get out of hand and provoke the generals in Ankara to rash action. His interference in the Cyprus issue could complicate any hope of settlement. His efforts to work out an independent foreign policy could antagonize both the United States and the Common Market and put Greece into dangerous isolation. Though Greeks applaud Papandreou's policy of national self-assertion, the cheering will quickly stop if it shuts Greece off from its natural allies.

PAPANDREOU'S economic policy is sober and practical. His foreign policy is theater mixed with guile: exciting theater, if you will, but theater. Like General de Gaulle, he wants other countries to take notice. He does this in the only way he can: by saying no. No to NATO. No to the American bases. No to the Common Market. No to sanctions against Moscow. Sometimes he doesn't mean no so much as he means "make it worth my while." For him provocation of friends is a technique of diplomacy. Thus his espousal of an "evenhanded" foreign policy between the two blocs—all the while assuming continued American protection.

Thus, too, his embrace of the Palestinian cause. Following the P.L.O.'s departure from Beirut, he not only offered hospitality to Yasir Arafat and his entourage, but received them with a guard of honor and stated that he was "deeply moved at receiving in our country this great fighter for freedom of his people." Going far beyond the circumspect position of any European leader, including Austria's Bruno Kreisky, he assured Arafat that Greece would support his "holy struggle."

His pro-Palestinian position may be tinged with a certain self-interest. When Lebanon fell apart in the mid-1970s, a lot of Arab money went to Athens. Papandreou would like to keep it there. He has tried to establish economic links with the Arab states through joint economic projects. He also wants Arab support in the United Nations on the Cyprus issue. But the Greek government under Papandreou has been a good deal less than evenhanded toward the Arab-Israel quarrel. Jewish leaders in Greece expressed concern to Papandreou over the "anti-Semitic tone" of the state press and radio-TV broadcasts following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon last summer. Although Papandreou has not altered his pro-Arab policy, he has now publicly tried to make a distinction between Israeli and Greek Jews.

"Our whole nation feels a great sensitivity to national liberation wars and refugee problems that goes back to the expulsion of Greeks from Turkey in the early 1920s and to Cyprus today," he told me. "But the Greeks are not anti-Semitic," he insisted, pointing out their efforts to protect the Jews from the Nazis during World War II. "Though we have no quarrel with the people of Israel," he continued, "we condemn the expansionist policies of its government. We believe that the Palestinians must have a home and the Israelis must have security."

THERE IS SOME grandstanding in this position, but it is also eminently practical. And like so many of his policies, it reflects both sentiment and perceived self-interest. Andreas Papandreou is not anti-Semitic. He is not a revolutionary. He is not even a radical. But he is a zealous advocate of Greek independence, an agile diplomat, and a brilliant politician. He is not neutral between East and West, but he is intent on giving Greece the maximum freedom of maneuver within that narrow space between the two mastodons. He is a Socialist because that is what left-liberals in Europe call themselves. If he jousts with Washington it is because the United States, not the Soviet Union, calls the shots in Greece.

Much more easily than we learned to live with de Gaulle, we can live with Andreas Papandreou. When the chips are down, he is solidly in the Western camp. He is dragging Greece into the mainstream of European society, knocking down archaic social structures and trying to achieve a standard of social and economic justice that has long been taken for granted in other West European countries.

The danger is not that he will succeed, but that he will be unable to sustain his juggling act. The global recession, the growing pressure on his left, the danger of provoking the Turks, and his own weakness for demagoguery may prove more than this agile political manipulator can deal with. He is an autocrat and demagogue, a patriot and reformer. His greatest weakness is not his arrogance, for he has turned that to good use, especially in foreign policy, but his unwillingness to tolerate people of independent judgment in his government. De Gaulle, of whom he could be considered a Hellenic version, could successfully be a one-man show because he had a powerful backup team. Papandreou doesn't.

Yet if Papandreou is willing to listen, as well as to argue, if he does not get carried away with his own words and the sound of applause, he might yet succeed in his daring gamble to create a solid foundation for democracy and justice in a country whose people have, for so long, been denied both.

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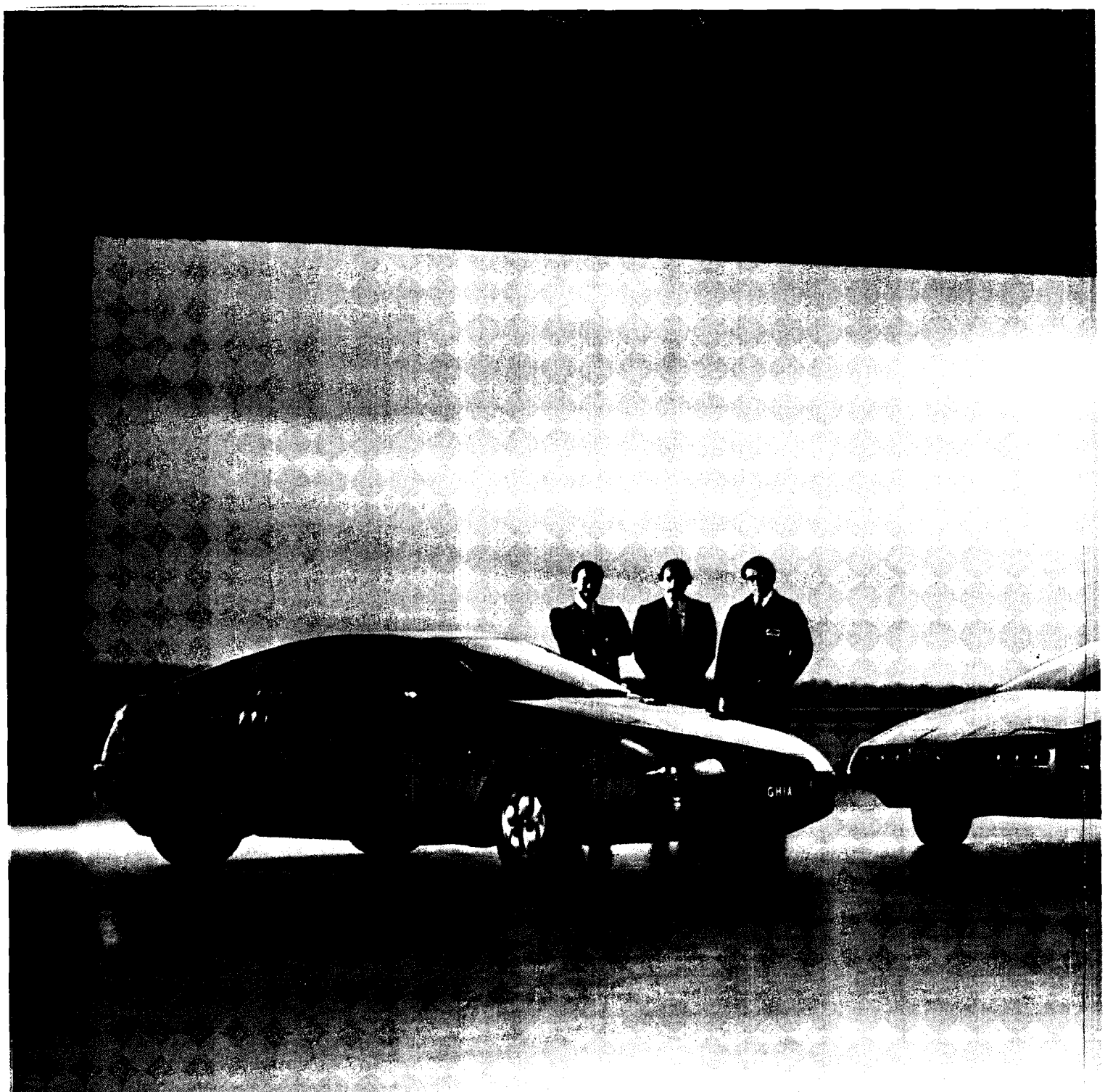

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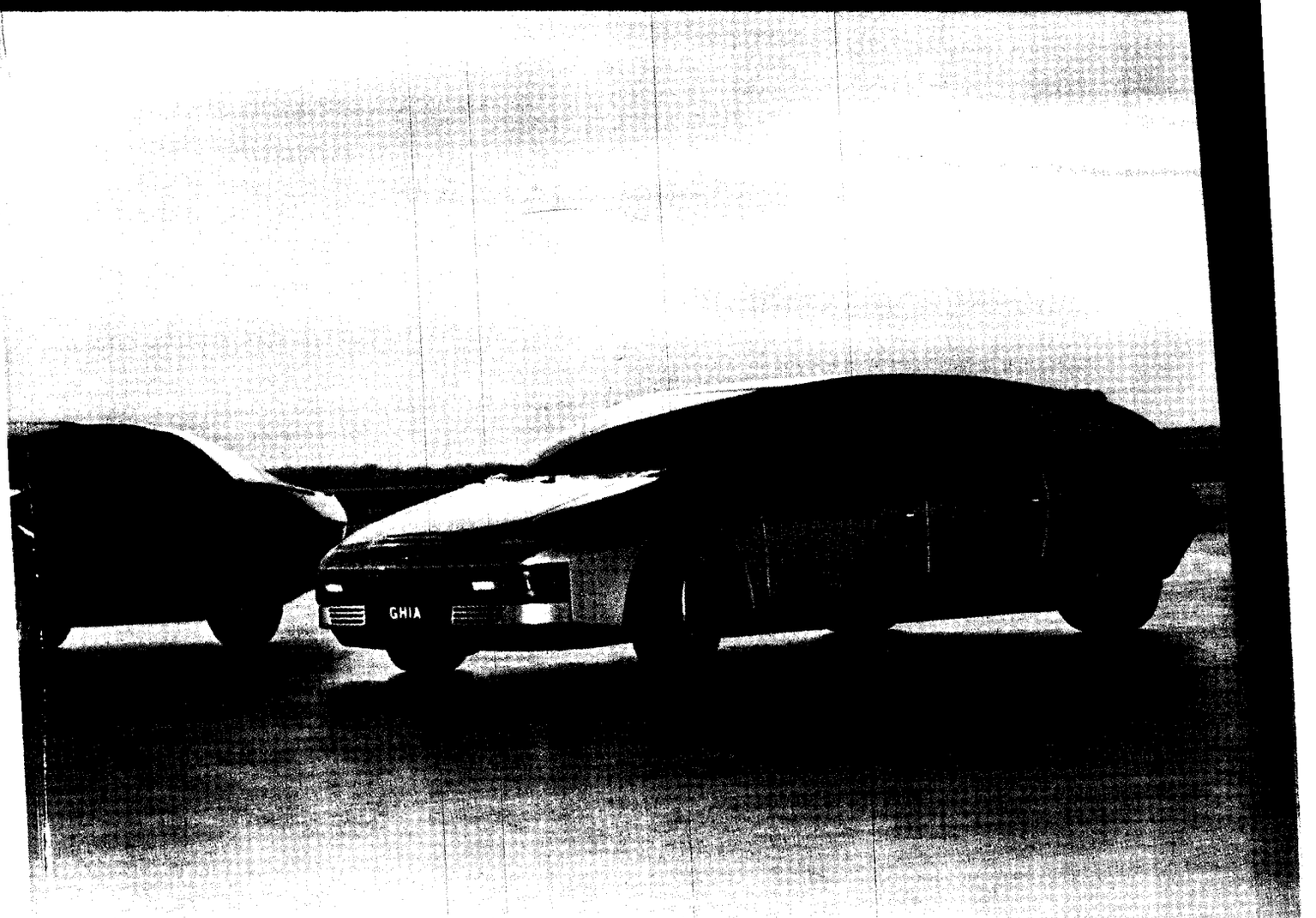

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STANLEY KAUFFMANN ON FILMS

Highland Fling, French Flummery

Local Hero
(Warner Brothers)

La Nuit de Varennes
(Triumph Films)

Bill Forsyth, the Scottish filmmaker, is getting better. On the other hand, he is also getting cleverer. *Gregory's Girl*, which he wrote and directed (TNR, June 23, 1982), was a homespun film in two ways: it had some knots in it, but it came freshly from some lives. Forsyth told a conventional yet taking story about high school boys and girls in a Lowlands town near Glasgow, and its affectionate regard for the kids' troubles gave the picture charm. Now Forsyth has moved to the Highlands. He has written and directed *Local Hero*, which, though it's set in a much smaller, less modernized place, is not homespun. The producer was David Puttnam, who did *Chariots of Fire*, and who has provided Forsyth with a budget and with colleagues that—not to discount Forsyth's learning by experience—have helped him over his earlier bumps. Once again Forsyth has made a film of considerable charm, but this time it's not of lives observed with sympathetic verity but of Movieland toured skillfully.

The affections of reality have been forsaken for the comforts of romance. The nub of the story is Scotland's offshore oil—transposed, apparently, from the northeast to the northwest coast. This offshore oil is coveted by a huge American oil company, headquartered in Houston. High in a Houston skyscraper is the ruler of the oil empire who, like all film tycoons, is a boy at heart. From the Acquisitions Department he sends to Scotland a young man named MacIntyre, on the assumption that a Scot can deal with Scots. Mac confides to a friend that he is really of Hungarian descent: his immigrant father changed the family name. I was surprised that Forsyth made nothing of this fact later, but I was thunderstruck that he thought a giant oil company would send one young man to acquire a potentially rich oil field—in which they had already invested millions for exploration and planning.

Well, at least Forsyth doubles the number. Mac picks up another young employee of the company, a true Scot, in Aberdeen, and the two young men drive up to the village of Ferness on its bay. Why the village isn't called Brigadoon, a place where two young men first arrived in 1947, is probably a matter of copyright, but barring the music and the magic, Ferness comes pretty close. It's a picture-postcard fishing village. That aspect is realistic enough: I once spent a blessed week in such a place. But in Ferness, everyone is lovable, nobody quarrels, nobody falls down drunk, and *it never rains*! More: the one hotel is run by an attractive educated young couple who set a haute cuisine table—true enough in Britain these days but not where there are no tourists. A punk girl is one of the inhabitants. A baby, presumably hers, could have been fathered by numerous men who all apparently look after it. The skipper of a Soviet fishing trawler visits often, is loved by all—*really* loved by the woman who runs the general store—sings Western songs at a dance and is resented by no one although his boat is taking fish from Scottish nets. There's an old recluse who lives in a hut on the beach who is dignified and philosophical, and the wee village kirk has a black African minister.

What dull literalist would disturb one atom of all this? Forsyth virtually tells us that this is going to be Getaway Time and that he'll do his best not to let us down. It is, and he doesn't. From the start in Houston, where the tycoon needs the help of a therapy-by-insult psychoanalyst, where Mac encounters nothing but unpleasant girl friends, we know we are in for contrast, for an idyll of the ideal. The skyscraper is set against the whitewashed cottage, the imperial grab against ecological ethics, even the canny money sense of the Scot (which is not scanted) against ancient ways of living. To quarrel with any of this, or the resolution, would be like quarreling with *L'Elisir d'Amore* because Donizetti doesn't accurately portray life in a nineteenth-century Italian village.

If we grant all this, which Forsyth amiably persuades us to do, then *Local Hero* joins the company of such cozy British-made film romances set in Scotland as *I Know Where I'm Going* (1945) and *Tight Little Island* (1949). (*Brigadoon*, Scottish setting though it has, is a somewhat different kettle of kippers.) In Forsyth's persuasion, there's only one partial flaw: the casting of Peter Riegert as Mac. He isn't quite credible as a rising oil-company hotshot, and he isn't sufficiently responsive to his Highland experiences. Compared with our own reactions, merely watching the village and villagers, the reactions of Riegert, who is "there," seem a bit stodgy. Burt Lancaster is the old tycoon and the old Lancaster. Denis Lawson does trimly as the smart young innkeeper, and Fulton MacKay radiates the right friendly self-reliance as the beach recluse.

On the whole, *Local Hero* is a pleasing bit of—I almost said Scottish pastry, but it's tastier than that. And there's a very last moment with a small, sharp stab. Wild haggis couldn't drag it out of me.

I much preferred the light romantic fabrications of *Local Hero* to the heavy implicative fabrications of *La Nuit de Varennes*.

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Betrayal. A lesser Harold Pinter play transformed into wry cinematic high comedy. Exquisitely written, directed, acted.

Parsifal. Highly idiosyncratic, teemingly imaginative. H. J. Syberberg has made Wagner's (complete) work into a musical film poem.

Sophie's Choice. A flabby picture from a flatulent novel, but it gives Meryl Streep a wonderful chance to prove that she is wonderful.

Tootsie. Dustin Hoffman darts and glistens in this always-amusing concoction about an actor who plays an actress—and is never again the same.

SK

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This is a French film written by the Italians Ettore Scola and Sergio Amidei, directed by Scola, which—a familiar device that can sometimes be effective—focuses on one event in history, in itself small and not widely known, that was a turning point of consequence.

The incident is the flight from Paris in 1791 of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, their recognition, and their arrest in a small inn in the town of Varennes. The film never shows the monarchs themselves: near the end, we see only their feet through the legs of the crowd. (The program assures us that Louis's feet were played by Michel Piccoli's feet.) The screenplay deals with those in the royal retinue and those whose paths crossed it, and Scola-Amidei have allowed some characters to be present because it can't be proved that they could not have been present—such as Restif de la Bretonne and Casanova. Restif pursues the king because of his authorial nose for news; the aging amorist is fleeing the Bohemian count who supports him and who has virtually imprisoned him. Various others weave through, nobility and opera singers and servants, even Tom Paine (who subsequently was elected to the National Convention).

A useful compact shape for a narrative, a lot of useful characters. But the film has no theme. Some superficial passes are made at the subject of the transition of power, but nothing that justifies the immensity of the effort. Mostly the film concentrates on facile pathos—of the rich and titled in degrading situations, of aging, of nostalgia. If Scola, an avowed Communist, was being ironical in his show of sympathies for these disenfranchised nobles or the pathetic old libertine, he failed to convey it. The French Revolution, as shown here, was just a great big nuisance to a lot of pleasant people.

The authors make matters worse by presenting the body of the film as a reenactment. The picture begins with a troupe of Venetian players on the bank of the Seine in Paris who are going to tell us the story. It ends with Restif watching the conclusion, then walking up the stone steps to the Left Bank of today. The beginning is sententious, the closing superfluous. If the film were relevant to us (it's not), that fact wouldn't need heavy-handed underscoring.

The lavishness—of costume and equipage—is more a tribute to the film's financiers than the director's eye. Jean-Louis Barrault, who proved in two New York stage appearances in the past decade that he has earned an honorable retirement, plays Restif with more smug appreciation of his talents than, at this late date, they merit. Marcello Mastroianni, the Casanova, is as wearying as he is wearied. Hanna Schygulla, the German actress who was lovely as Effi in *Effi Briest*, has some appeal as the aristocrat most often required to draw pathos from discomfort. Jean-Claude Brialy plays a fluttery hairdresser, and you have seen his performance by reading those words. Now read a few less credible words: Tom Paine is played by Harvey Keitel.

Two-and-a-quarter hours of expensive, portentous claptrap. Perhaps the monarchs should have been spared the guillotine. But some judicious guillotining of this lengthy film would have been a boon.

A monument to status anxiety.

The Vanity Of 'Vanity Fair'

By Henry Fairlie

Once upon a time—between September 1913 and February 1936—there was *Vanity Fair*. A quarter of a century after it folded, Cleveland Amory called it "America's most memorable magazine," and only a curmudgeon would quarrel with that accolade. It inspired an unusual fondness in both its contributors and its readers when it was alive, and amazingly its reputation still inspires much the same fondness in those who have never turned its pages. It is understandable that Condé Nast Publications Inc., the firm descended from the original publisher, should have been tempted to revive it. After all, not even the soul (imagine such a thing) of a present-day corporate publisher can be satisfied by turning out the steadily successful *Vogue* and *Bride's* and *Glamour* and *House & Garden* and *Gentleman's Quarterly* and *Mademoiselle* and *Self*. So after more than a year of preparation, after the laying out of $10 million, and after a lot of ballyhoo, the new *Vanity Fair* has appeared, numbered "Vol. 46, No. 1."

Perhaps one should just brush it aside—so crude, so wasted, so trumpery an effort: so crude that the twelve pages of ads for Ralph Lauren's clothes stand out as by far the most appealing, likable, and even interesting thing in the whole 294 pages: even the rather unbelievable picture of the young man (Princeton, Class of '20) who clearly, knowing that he is beautiful, does not worry that he may be damned; his left hand caressing his right knee, his deep gaze that of a man who does not need a mirror to look timelessly on himself (see our cover). The magazine costs "a hefty $3," as *The New York Times* put it: a quarter for each page of Ralph Lauren, and you have, I suppose, your money's worth; at least you had better think so, for there is little else to persuade. But we have to ask why, with such a model as the old *Vanity Fair* to inspire it, the new one is so awful. (So *ugly*, as I heard it called.) Is it just the publisher or the editor who is to blame? Or is it our own time? Or is it even New York—what has become of New York?

By numbering itself "Vol. 46, No. 1"—an act of bravado—it invites comparison with its predecessor. Not even the excellent anthology from the old *Vanity Fair*, which was published in 1960, really gives any idea of how wonderfully alive that magazine was, issue after issue for more than twenty years. One must read it—hold it in one's hands—as the magazine it was.

It first appeared in September 1913 as *Dress & Vanity Fair*, having joined itself to the fashion magazine, and proclaimed in its subtitle that it would cover "Fashions. Stage. Society. Sports. The Fine Arts." The marriage with *Dress* had a predictable result. After the ads at the beginning came: a full-page photograph of Anna Pavolwa (sic), three-and-a-half pages on the Piping Rock Country Club in Long Island, four-and-a-half pages of pictures and text on Paris hats, three more pages on fashion photographs, one page of photographs of "Summer Diversions of Royalty"—and how quaint they are, one page of stills from

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the Drury Lane Company's film of *Hamlet*, and so on. The promise lay only in the first editorial—"The brighter side of life is by no means the lesser side of life. Therefore in the pages of *Dress & Vanity Fair*, much of the joy of living will be found reflected, and much, too, of its more serious components." And it lay in a lament for Fifth Avenue—("now it is all trade and motors")—to which I will return, for it tells us something.

The second issue struck out boldly with an article by Louis Sherman defending plays that dealt with serious social issues—for example, prostitution: "Of all the pestilent humbugs in America, the alleged purity crusader is the worst." It noticed in the authors of the plays a "growing sympathy with what is vaguely termed 'socialism,' " and had considerable fun at the expense of Police Commissioner McAdoo, who had stopped the run of Bernard Shaw's *Mrs. Warren's Profession* and arrested all those who took part. The marriage with *Dress* was doomed to divorce.

The divorce came with the fifth issue, when the name was changed to *Vanity Fair*. The same issue announced that from the March 1914 issue the editor would be Frank Crowninshield, who was to remain its editor to the end. In his first editorial he set himself against the puritanism that was the target also of such young rebels as Van Wyck Brooks and Randolph Bourne: "Let us instance one respect in which American life has recently undergone a great change. We allude to its increased devotion to pleasure, to happiness, to dancing, to sport. . . , to the delights of the country, to laughter, and to all forms of cheerfulness. This tendency among us has been of late the subject of many parental warnings, admonitory sermons and somewhat lugubrious editorials. For our part it seems a bright sign in the heavens." Taking sides even more emphatically, in defense of the "modern woman" who was being blamed for the collapse of all virtue, he went on: "For women we intend to do something in a noble and missionary spirit. . . . We mean to appeal to their intellects. . . , and we hereby announce ourselves as determined and bigoted feminists." By the time one turns to a page of cartoons, "Sex High Jinks," *Vanity Fair*'s course is set.

That course took it head-high into the 1920s, and more than any other magazine comparable to it, even Mencken's and Nathan's *Smart Set* or their *American Mercury*, it captured at the time and still captures for us their spirit; not all of their spirit, for the 1920s were much more complex, even much more earnest, years than the legend of them allows, yet the spirit for which they are most celebrated, as *Vanity Fair* celebrated it in its own "Hall of Fame" each month, the men and women who were "making life less dull and more enchanting."

ILLUSTRATION BY MICK HAGGERTY FROM 'VANITY FAIR,' MARCH 1983

There is no need here to repeat the triumphs of editorship. By publishing her "Men: A Hate Song," Crowninshield lured from *Vogue* a "shy young copywriter" named Dorothy Rothschild, who then blossomed as Dorothy Parker. He printed "The Social Life of the Newt" by an unknown Harvard graduate, Robert C. Benchley, which later became his short film, *The Sex Life of the Polyp*. Aldous Huxley appeared in almost every issue from January 1921; D. H. Lawrence contributed regularly from February 1924; there were Thomas Wolfe and e. e. cummings, Max Beerbohm and Colette, P. G. Wodehouse and André Gide. "The great wrote about each other," says Frederick J. Hoffman in *The Twenties*. Gertrude Stein on Picasso, Edmund Wilson (Jr., as he then signed himself) on T. S. Eliot, Eliot on Lawrence and James Joyce; and of course there was Walter Lippmann—always, everywhere, in the 1920s there was Walter Lippmann . . . the list is almost endless.

But such a catalog does not mean much. It is not names in themselves that make a magazine. A magazine has to have a feel to it. A good magazine is a balancing of the familiar with the unpredictable. It must be familiar enough for its readers to feel that they know (and trust) it and so look forward to it as if it were an old armchair; but it must also be unpredictable enough to take its readers unawares from time to time with an unexpected piece that makes them sit up, and even write those endearing letters (as long as there are not too many of them) canceling their subscriptions. The *Vanity Fair* of Frank Crowninshield achieved this balance almost unerringly; and the fundamental criticism of the new (and bastard) *Vanity Fair* is that it gives no sense of what kind of piece or illustration either belongs or does not belong in its pages.

It is slung together—after that year's preparation, after the outlay of those $10 million—a mess at its heart. This is presumably why its first issue appears with no statement of aims, although its prede-

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cessor could clearly state its aims even while it was wedded to *Dress*. It is also why it is difficult, even after several perusals, to tell the ads from the illustrations. One can have only an increased admiration for *The New Yorker* which, with much the same kind of advertising, nevertheless manages to subdue it and keep its text plainly distinct. In the new *Vanity Fair* it is hard to tell whether the illustration of Robert De Niro and Meryl Streep by Mick Haggerty is not an ad—a garish but lackluster imitation of poster art as a first-year commercial art student might attempt it—and whether the two double-page spreads of ads for Lois sportswear are not illustrations of the story by Gabriel García Márquez. This is not just a matter of the lousiest, most confusing layout with which any glossy magazine can ever have appeared, but a matter of fraudulence, of publishing a magazine whose publisher and editors (and so its contributors) have no idea why it is needed, what they have to tell, or even in what time or place they have their being.

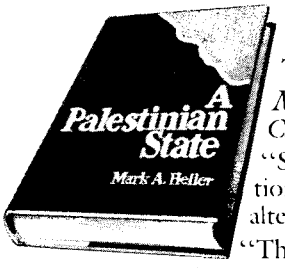
Disraeli once told the students of Glasgow University that two kinds of knowledge were necessary for success in life. The first was self-knowledge. The second was knowledge of the spirit of the age. That did not mean, he said, that one must follow that spirit; it might be necessary to resist it, but it was essential to know the spirit of the age in which one lived and acted. The one clear virtue of the old *Vanity Fair* was that it knew the spirit of its age. It did not always follow it, it often resisted and challenged it; it certainly teased it. It is not irrelevant that Frank Crowninshield was one of the active sponsors of the famous Armory Show in 1913, or that he played a part in helping to found the Museum of Modern Art in 1930—two dates in the art history of New York that almost set the boundaries to the life of his magazine—for it was from such high seriousness, such dedication to the arts and to literature, that there came the fun, the extraordinary fun, of *Vanity Fair*, including its joyful celebration of the flapper.

With absolute joy, but also with seriousness, it saluted the flapper:

> She will go to school. She will talk philosophy, physiology and art with you. She will be a stenographer, a school teacher, a movie actress.
>
> But she will not cook for you.
>
> She will not do your washing.
>
> She will not knit her own stockings.

That was Alfredo Panzini on "The Flap-

If you oppose the creation of a Palestinian state, this book could change your mind.



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Mark A. Heller,
Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University

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per—A New Type" in September 1921. But three months later, in waded Heywood Broun to make quite sure, in an article called "Canonizing the Flapper," that the worship was not carried too far: "The discovery has at last been made that though the flapper may smoke and drink and swear, underneath her rough exterior she has a heart of gold."

So the old Vanity Fair took its stand in its own age, applauding much of what was going on, always cheerfully interested in it, but never revering it. Again and again, it was on target, as in John Peale Bishop's review of *The Beautiful and Damned*:

> But, as with *This Side of Paradise*, the most interesting thing about Mr. Fitzgerald's book is Mr. Fitzgerald. He has already created about himself a legend. . . . He has an amazing grasp of the superficialities of the men and women about him, but he has not yet a profound understanding of their motives, either intellectual or passionate. Even with his famous flapper, he has as yet failed to show that hard intelligence, that intricate emotional equipment, upon which her charm depends.

One believes that Crowninshield knew exactly what he was doing when beneath a photograph of Mary Pickford, as she was about to leave for France, he put the caption: "What Marie Antoinette was to Eighteenth Century France, Mary Pickford is to Twentieth Century America." (In fact, I would not be surprised if that was one of Dorothy Parker's gems. After all, her first job was to write captions, and her first caption was to six photographs of underwear: "Brevity is the soul of lingerie, as the Petticoat said to the Chemise.") But then one turns to the celebrities who are celebrated by the new *Vanity Fair*—the "Crowned Heads: Robert De Niro and Meryl Streep," Roy Lichtenstein, Kevin Kline, Debra Winger, and Michael Graves—and, apart from conveying no hint of why *these* were chosen, the reverence is almost hushed. Of De Niro and Streep: "They rule then, because we willingly become their subjects, because for a few hours in the dark they have no peers." Of Lichtenstein: "Was anyone foolish enough to think he couldn't do that, if he wanted to, and make it work like a dream?" This is insincere writing, hence its gushing earnestness.

There are *People*-length tributes to Elizabeth Hardwick, to John Huston, to V. S. Pritchett, all very deserving people, but why *them*, now, in March 1983? The magazine has nothing to say about them. They are thrown in as little dollops of culture, olives in the martini, for what culture is to the new *Vanity Fair*, which it never was to the old, is busy name dropping. In a wretched piece of trash about Alfred Hitchcock by one of the editors himself, Walter Clemons, the name dropping is carried to the point of unself-conscious caricature. Opening sentence: "Imprisoned in every fat man, Cyril Connolly thought, a thin one was wildly signalling to get out." Closing sentence: "A mousetrap skillfully set, Hamlet told us, can catch a conscience." Thanks, Cyril. Thanks, Hamlet. And thanks, Walter, for letting us share. But why those names, Connolly and Hamlet, why those pointless allusions? Jesus, as St. John said, wept.

FOR THERE must be some weeping at this travesty. If it is not just the fault of the editors (one of whom publishes himself three times in the one issue with his punch-drunk newsmagazine prose—". . . .with plenty of power when Le Carré floorboards his story to the end . . .") can it be the fault of our age? Is this a reflection of ourselves; at our best, at our worst, it hardly matters? Do we twitter as vulgarly as this, even at a cocktail party where one would, indeed, expect to find the contributors, Calvin Trillin, John Leonard, Nora Ephron, Richard Avedon, Snowdon (there's the royalty), and Andy Warhol, tired, limp Andy Warhol, always roped in by editors who want a show of Art? Perhaps our age really is like this; in which case, we may as well put up the shutters, and be done with it. Is this all that $10 million can do?

As one would expect, the prose is the giveaway; or rather, one should say, the traducing of prose. Good prose, that down-to-earth concrete manner of expression, rests securely (and so, unexpectedly, can take wing) only on its honesty. Poetry can get away with lies—poetry trades in magnificent lies—but prose cannot afford them. The false, forced, fatuous brightness of the writing in the new *Vanity Fair* does not torture the language—it is not even as impressive as that—it twitches it. It is not electric. It is the jerk of the man in the electric chair after the electricity has passed through him. How flat—this is what is telling—are its peaks:

Carol Flake on *The Night of the Shooting Stars*: "Still, like a verismo opera, it sweeps us along, leaving us as forlorn as Galvano when the world returns to normal." Bull. And imagine how a non-verismo opera would sweep us along.

Elizabeth Pochoda on Czeslaw Milosz: "Milosz has a generous mind as well as a Nobel Prize." That about says it all; that is what passes for critical judgment. What is meant by the juxtaposition? Are Nobel Prize winners expected or not expected to have generous minds, and who really cares, when it is put like that, about either?

Wayne Lawson on *Cats*: "And John Napier's set and costumes are so brilliant they make you want to be a cat and live in an alley." Make *who* want to? "You," he says. Not *me*, emphatically not me.

THEN THERE IS John Leonard, that dauntless exposer of the empty spaces, the interior desert of his mind—which is like Australia, populated round the fringes, a trackless vacancy inside. At $80,000 a year, it is said, he is meant to be the flagship of this disordered fleet of toy *Titanics*. (Well, one mixes one's metaphors after a weekend with *Vanity Fair*.) In an expected piece of puffery for the magazine in the "Style" section of *The Washington Post*, the author says of Leonard's piece that he "writes in an experimental style about America today." One might as well talk of an experimental burp. He engages in a dialogue with some unknown, unnamed Japanese woman: "She wants to know what America was like in the 1970s. (Never mind who *she* is.) I want to know why the local god of music has five eyes. (I'm not an innocent abroad.)" And then, half a page later: "She watches me play with her toes." He's got it wrong. Japanese women are not altogether inane. She was watching him play with his toes—which is all that his writing ever is—and his picture of America today never gets beyond his toes. But he really ought not to

COMING:

Paul Fussell
on
Edmund Wilson.

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be caught painting them in public.

There is, of course, the story by García Márquez; but to lift one plum from a Nobel Prize winner (who is also, no doubt, generous minded) is more a proof of money than of editorial acumen. There is a piece by Gore Vidal on the Gobi Desert—you have to write about something—which makes one sigh (and this is an achievement of the magazine), "Some writing, actual writing, at last." There is a piece by Robert Stone praising Joan Didion's book on El Salvador, which confirms my belief that the real allure of her writing is that she is a defrocked nun, whether in California or El Salvador, surprised always to find virtue in wickedness and wickedness in virtue.

You are allowed in *Vanity Fair* to care about El Salvador in a pointless kind of way, as long as no one up north is inconvenienced. So here is our own Ronald Steel, saying that America should mind *its own* business, replace "the old internationalism" with "a stricter notion of self-interest, one that recognizes the difference between what we can do and what we would like to do." But this sounds all too much like the kind of country the advertisers in these pages want: an enclave where narcissistic consumerism can flourish.

THIS NEW *Vanity Fair* is from Madison Avenue, literally and figuratively; it is a Madison Avenue *product*, a packaged brain(?)child of a publishing corporation, its accountants, and the advertisers. It has no other reason for being but to make money for the publishing corporation, its accountants, and the advertisers. You could have put a computer in the editor's chair, and it would have printed out the name of David Levine as the man for a caricature. (The bother about a Levine caricature now is that it looks like every other one. When one's seen one, as Barry Goldwater thought, one's seen them all.) So the magazine is aimed at the rich.

But that is not really the point. In a way the old *Vanity Fair* lived off the richness of the 1920s. If the rich had not been there, tossing their money all over the place, *Vanity Fair* would have had no one to laugh at, and in the end to console it, for it was quite fun in the 1920s to see so many people all enjoying being rich. But the new *Vanity Fair* is addressed to the fretful rich. We knew that the fretful rich were becoming a problem when *The New York Times* felt that it had to begin a "Living" section. (The fright-

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fully rich do not have to be told how to spend their money.) The fretful rich suffer from what in the 1950s was discovered to be "status anxiety." The new *Vanity Fair* is, from start to finish, a magazine of status anxiety.

That is where we must return to Fifth Avenue. The lament for its passing in the first issue of *Dress & Vanity Fair* was insignificant. Until the beginning of this century, Fifth Avenue was not just rich, it was all style, the Fifth Avenue of Edith Wharton. Even as late as 1916, Hart Crane could write to his father, when he saw it for the first time: "I have just been out for a long ride up Fifth Avenue on an omnibus. It was very cold but clear, and the marble facades of the marvelous mansions shone like crystal in the sun." But then with the coming of the electric railway, which made Park Avenue livable (but not lovable, as Fifth had been), "all the rich" (for that is how the rich are usually talked about) moved from Fifth to Park. They moved from the mansions of Fifth to the high apartment barracks of Park (THE NEW REPUBLIC at the time did what would now be called an "in-depth" study of how many of the rich could now live under one roof), and with that move something went out of New York's life forever. "Where else is there a spectacle like the recently grown splendor of Park Avenue," asked Waldo Frank in 1925, "that parade of pompous tombs, shutting in wealth and shutting out the sun?" The rich no longer, one might say, felt at home with their wealth.

But still something of that spirit carried all through the New York of the 1920s—it leaps from the letters of young writers like Hart Crane or Edmund Wilson—and the old *Vanity Fair* carried that spirit of New York in its heart. Condé Nast himself wrote in December 1921: "New York is the mirror of America. In the polished surface of this great metropolis are reflected the shadows of citizens from all over the world." From that unfretful New York of the 1920s there bubbled forth all those magazines, the *Smart Set* and the *American Mercury*, *Vanity Fair* and, of course, *The New Yorker*, and it is endless fun to watch, in their letters, the writers of the time jumping from one magazine to the other. "Cummings looks bilious and harried," wrote Hart Crane to Waldo Frank in 1925. "His connections with *Vanity Fair* are broken and like the rest of us he is looking for pennies." John O'Hara wanted to write about coal mines for *The New Yorker*. Wolcott Gibbs told him one night in a speakeasy, talking of O'Hara and his brother: "You O'Haras simply refuse to recognize the fact that *The New Yorker* isn't for clever people. *The New Yorker*'s for people who live on Riverside Drive," and O'Hara admitted to his brother that Gibbs might be right: "Pennsylvania mining country is not good copy in a magazine read by people who don't know the difference between anthracite and bituminous." Unfretful writers and unfretful readers. (It is wholly characteristic that Richard Avedon's photographs in the new *Vanity Fair* are of coal miners whom he manages to translate into punk rock stars with their faces blackened.)

But all through it went the alertness, the serious curiosity about what was happening to the whole society, even while pinning it down to New York. "We have no convenient local symbol of the upper class," wrote Frank Moore Colby in *Vanity Fair* in 1921, "and when you think of New York best society you never think of any name of person or place; you think only of an income." He spoke of

> the few general symbols that remain, such as Wall Street for sin and shame, Brooklyn for rusticity, Harlem for distance, Bowery for low life. As for high life, jumping about the city like a neuralgic pain. . . .

And there, sixty-two years later now, is the evidence. For that is exactly all the high life that there is in the new *Vanity Fair*—"jumping about the city like a neuralgic pain"—and what it marks, sadly, is the death of New York.

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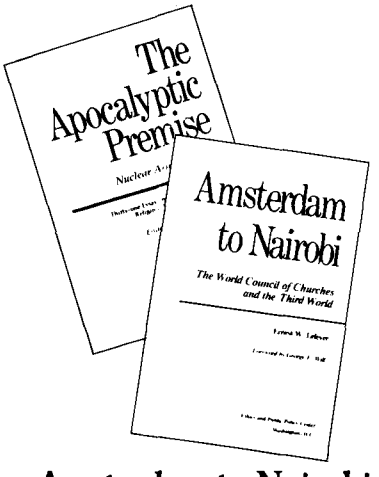

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MICHAEL'S PEOPLE

After Long Silence
by Michael Straight

(Norton, 351 pp., $17.50)

For underground Communists who surface and later write about their experience, the choice is usually either a memoir of atonement or an apologia. Whittaker Chambers's *Witness* remains even today the classic Augustinian document of the genre while Kim Philby's *My Silent War* is the crispest and least apologetic account of "the way it was." Michael Straight chose, whether through accident or design, to straddle the two modes of revelation in *After Long Silence*, "a political memoir rather than an autobiography." Straight's narrative takes its rich, well-connected pilgrim through an ideological progress from Cambridge Communist school days to brief service as a reluctant communicant with a Soviet agent in prewar Washington, then to cold war liberal activism and belated disclosure of his secret past.

For readers of this magazine, Michael Straight's book retains the poignant immediacy of a close relative's confessional. His parents, Willard and Dorothy Whitney Straight, founded THE NEW REPUBLIC and ran it during its influential infancy in the Wilson Presidency. Their younger son, Michael, anointed himself first Washington editor and, then, publisher and editor from 1941 to 1956. Thus his memoir presents certain considerations of "family," not only to the magazine but—through kindred association with TNR—to this reviewer as well. Several years ago, THE NEW REPUBLIC stood alongside me, bravely but expensively, in a book-related libel action involving millions of dollars brought by a former Communist Party activist. Although the lawsuit was settled prior to trial at minor cost in preference to what loomed as bankrupting legal expenses in court for both me and the magazine, that experience encouraged on my part—and doubtless on the magazine's—a healthy alertness toward aggrieved souls with litigious instincts. I preface my review by rehearsing this background only because Mr. Straight has already put one commentator, William Safire, on notice in a letter to *The New York Times* that, because of Safire's criticisms, "in the opinion of my attorneys, I have been seriously libeled by *The New York Times*."

The book's title comes from a poem by W. B. Yeats, whom Straight cites often in his memoir, which begins: "Speech after long silence; it is right,/All other lovers being estranged or dead." Straight decided to publish a "life," he tells us, because of garbled press reports concerning his earlier entanglement with the "first" man (Guy Burgess) and "fourth man" (Anthony Blunt)—though not the second and third, Donald Maclean and Harold "Kim" Philby—among the Soviet agents once high in England's governing elite.

The author frontloads his narrative, devoting half the book to his youth and young manhood prior to, during, and immediately after his period of Communist involvement in the late 1930s and early 1940s. He was reared largely by governesses and other family retainers, and the dominant presence in his early years—by his own account—appears to have been his wealthy and energetic mother, a woman whose trans-Atlantic commitments to a range of social causes spanned two husbands and half a century. Uprooted from a luxurious American boyhood after the death of his father and his mother's remarriage to a British educational reformer, Straight passed from the utopian experimentation of school years into Cambridge intimacy during the mid-1930s with a cluster of close friends prominent among the "ruling class radicals" whose activities then dominated the university.

After his closest friend, a Communist poet named John Cornford, had been killed fighting in Spain during the Civil War; another Party notable at Cambridge, the future art historian Anthony Blunt, recruited Straight for service as a secret agent in the United States, though—by his own account—Straight had had no intention of returning there prior to his discussions with Blunt. Once back here, however, he found himself in the center of late-New Deal activity, thanks to family connections. Thus, his ship having docked, "my stepfather, Jerry, and I went on to Washington. We had tea with President and Mrs. Roosevelt in the White House. I began my search for a job." The "search" did not prove arduous, as Straight—aided and abetted by the Roosevelts and *their* retainers—moved casually through a series of blue chip positions, some created especially for him.

In the spring of 1938, Michael Straight began an irregular series of encounters with a Soviet agent known to him only as "Michael Green" (a man whom he could identify in the mid-1960s from F.B.I. snapshots). Straight tells us that he turned over to Green in the next three years only a few copies of reports that he had prepared personally while working at the State Department ("of little or no value to him") but *not* confidential government documents. Later, while working at the Department of the Interior, he provided Green with still another "four or five commentaries of my own," again unclassified. When his former Cambridge acquaintance, Guy Burgess, visited him at one point, Straight notes that he came to recognize Burgess's own role as a Soviet agent.

News of Straight's underground activi-

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ties became public in the late 1970s, and the E. M. Forster chestnut about sticking by one's friends in a choice between "betraying" friends and country finds its way into Straight's discussions of the episode, as he tries to defend his holding back from the authorities until the mid-1960s his knowledge that Blunt, Burgess, and other Cambridge Communists had become Soviet operatives. The Forster line is inappropriate, however, not only because no legal authority of the U.S. government (nor this reviewer) alleges that Straight "betrayed" his country but, more importantly, because neither Blunt nor Burgess were really Straight's "friends," again by his own account. Straight's closest friends were figures such as John Cornford and others who shared the romanticism of the time, platonic in Straight's case, which turned male comradeship into what the author describes as "the 'violent love' that I felt for my friends at Cambridge." Only by extension did Straight include acquaintances such as Burgess and Blunt in his circle of loyalties.

Nor does Straight's account of his dealings with "Michael Green" seem thoroughly persuasive, given what we know from other sources about Soviet underground work in Washington during these years. By the evidence of this book, Straight portrays himself as an amiable naïf "controlled" by a Muscovite buffoon (two decades later, the F.B.I. confirmed for Straight that his associate was a well-known Russian operative). Thus, after a trajectory of dissatisfaction with Communism dating apparently from the Nazi-Soviet Pact, Straight describes a final meeting with "Green" in 1941 at which the latter invites Straight to dinner with Earl Browder, then head of the American Communist Party. Straight declines, but the Russian insists on a farewell dinner in New York with Green's American-born wife, which Straight attended. More bizarre still, Green—recall, a disciplined Soviet spymaster—"asked me to help him in finding a place to live in Philadelphia, and in obtaining some small business that he could run." Although Straight notes that he refused to assist Green in setting up such a mamushka and pop shop, the *only* credible explanation for the latter's behavior—short of a plan to leave "secret work" himself—was that Green believed Straight still under discipline and willing to help with a "cover" identity. The author seems not to recognize this curious possibility.

Meanwhile, back at THE NEW REPUBLIC after wartime service in the Army Air Corps, Straight (now a left liberal) designed a strategy for reviving the magazine under a new editor, former Vice President Henry Wallace, only to watch with increasing dismay as Wallace became a pliant front for Communists and other leftist ideologues determined to run him for the Presidency. Straight abetted the early stages of this process, prior to breaking with Wallace in 1948, and on one occasion accompanied Wallace on a speaking tour of England (during which he describes another Guy Burgess visit). Nowhere in the book is the interplay of patrician habit and reformist belief exposed more succinctly than in Straight's observation of Wallace's London tour: "In place of Henry Luce's vision of the American century, [Wallace] offered his own vision: the century of the Common Man. We stayed for three days at the Savoy."

Straight's memory plays tricks on him here. As New Dealers chose sides during the early Truman years, anti-Soviet "cold war liberals" mobilized within the Americans for Democratic Action, while left-leaning Wallace folk formed the Progressive Citizens of America. The author recalls: "My own association (in 1947) was with the A.D.A." But Alonzo L. Hamby's standard monograph on the struggles within American liberalism tells another story. According to Hamby, Straight straddled the issues. Although critical of Communist efforts to take over liberal organizations, "he reacted strongly against the Truman Doctrine and the Cold War, and was in any case too awe-struck by Wallace to disagree with him." Straight's Wallace emerges as the embodiment of a liberal romantic just as, a decade earlier, his friend John Cornford had epitomized Communist romanticism. His break with Wallace apparently came as much because of Wallace's growing affinity for a circle of advisers further to the left as any major doctrinal disagreement. Wallace simply abandoned his young friend—and THE NEW REPUBLIC's editorship—for pinker pastures.

WHILE campaigning against Wallace and for Truman, Straight encountered the Communist issue not by the exposure of his own earlier role but through the indictment on perjury charges of an old acquaintance, Alger Hiss. Straight's reponse to that situation tells us much about his thinking at the time and for fifteen years thereafter when assessing his own predicament. After speaking to Hiss, Straight judges the man by his own confusions:

> If he had been distraught, I might have believed him. But he was calm and assured, as if he had prepared himself for years for the moment when the story would break. I sensed then that Chambers was telling the truth. . . .

Compare Straight, soon to be a vanguard liberal opponent of McCarthyism, in this "weak, evasive answer" to Guy Burgess and Anthony Blunt, at a 1949 dinner meeting of the Cambridge secret society (the notorious "Apostles" club) to which they all belonged:

> "Are you still with us?" [Burgess] asked.
> "You know that I'm not," I said.
> "You're not totally unfriendly?"
> "If I were," I said, "why would I be here?"

Conceding that Burgess and Blunt were trying to determine whether Straight had "already turned [them] in to the authorities" or was likely to do so, the author still does not fully confront the range of factors that might have determined his decision not to turn informer. True, he shared the visceral repugnance toward ex-Communist witnesses such as Whittaker Chambers that characterized the liberal anti-Communist milieu in which he

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operated, quoting without comment *The Nation*'s crude dismissal of their testimony: "Any neurotic exhibitionist who can claim to have been a Communist is now assured of absolution, self-satisfying publicity and, probably, more material rewards." Above all, Straight seems to object to their total and public disavowal of Communism; he preferred a partial and private penance, battling those Communists who metastasized within liberal organizations such as the American Veterans Committee but rejecting the necessity of personal confession. Why? Possibly because, as he concedes, he "did not look on Communism as 'an absolute evil,' as Whittaker Chambers held it to be." Moreover, "I did not want to allow my own life to be warped by bitterness and regret."

When he met Burgess and Blunt in 1949, another consideration may have encouraged his decision to remain silent. Alger Hiss's first trial had ended with a hung jury, liberal opinion within the United States and abroad remained divided on the case, and there seemed a good chance that Hiss would escape conviction at his retrial. Why, then, tempt the fates by squealing prematurely? Just as Straight had promised Burgess and Blunt not to inform on them, so had the two Englishmen implicitly taken a comparable vow about him. Holding one another's future in jeopardy led to that balance of personal terror that Straight tells us affected his life for two decades afterward. His life was "warped" by a fear of exposure well displayed in subsequent meetings, including a final encounter with Guy Burgess.

THE YEAR WAS 1951, the United States was at war in Korea, Alger Hiss had been convicted, the Soviets' atom spy network had been exposed and its principals brought to trial when—on a Washington street corner appropriately adjacent to the British Embassy—Apostle Straight unexpectedly bumps into Apostle Burgess. Angry that Burgess has broken what Straight interpreted as an earlier "promise" to leave government—and therefore, espionage work—he threatens to expose the Englishman, characteristically for this presumed violation of *personal* trust: "You broke your word to me." Again, Straight flounders, and several months later, his silence still intact, Burgess and Maclean flee to the Soviet Union to escape certain arrest. In the months that follow, Straight finds himself still unable to blurt out in several discussions with British and American intelligence friends his knowledge of Burgess's treachery.

But would it have mattered? What if Michael Straight had informed on Burgess (*and* Blunt) prior to the former's defection? For one thing, it might have led to the arrest not only of Blunt and Burgess but, also, of Maclean, Kim Philby (then still a pivotal figure in British intelligence), and still other Soviet agents recruited originally in the halcyon years of Cambridge Communism. Even forgetting for the moment Maclean's earlier access to American postwar atomic secrets during his Washington posting, Philby's intimate awareness of Allied covert secrets, and Blunt's ability to identify an entire coven of well-bred Soviet operatives in England, Straight himself suggests the enormity of Burgess's presence in Washington at the time they met:

> . . . I thought, he would have known of our plans to advance into North Korea. He would have sent that information to Moscow if at all possible. The Kremlin, in turn, would have handed it to Peking. If I was right, Guy could have caused the deaths of many American soliders. That thought left me numb.

Unfortunately for his country, Michael Straight remained "numb" until 1963. He sold THE NEW REPUBLIC, published several novels, and during the Kennedy Administration became an arts consultant to the government. Only the likelihood of his appointment in 1963 as chairman of Kennedy's new Advisory Council on the Arts (forerunner of the National Endowment for the Arts) led finally—after private parleys with White House friends—to Straight's revealing to the F.B.I. his knowledge of Blunt, Burgess, "Green," and other Soviet agents.

The rich *are* different from us, as a certain American writer pointed out. Not only do they have more money, but—if only for that reason—they can buy far more time than ordinary people to confront the consequences of their actions, in politics as elsewhere in life. Thus the story that Straight would not reveal to Roosevelt during World War II or to either Truman or Eisenhower during the Korean War came pouring out finally in stylish fasion—White House to friendly

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F.B.I. questioners—lest an Administration staffed by his own kind, class and generation, be injured.

The Bureau, in turn, notified British counterintelligence. This led directly to Anthony Blunt's confession of complicity the following year and to Straight's meeting with British agents over the next decade to provide additional details on the Cambridge network. During this period, Straight served the Nixon Administration as deputy director of the National Arts Endowment, an irony apparently lost on the author. He attacks Nixon's career as an anti-Communist legislator but thanks him for his "magnanimity" in allowing Straight eight years in the arts bureaucracy; by contrast, Straight criticizes Truman severely for setting the stage for McCarthyism "and for our disastrous intervention in Vietnam." In retrospect, at least, Straight takes the 1948 Wallace position on Truman.

NOR DOES STRAIGHT, whose new career began after his belated confession, display an excess of compassion toward a man who lost his livelihood in order reluctantly to testify against his former Communist cohorts despite grave cost in public esteem and personal anguish. Thus the author passes judgment on his own confession and finds it tardy but admirable. He contrasts Whittaker Chambers's "messianic" rationale for naming names—"the conviction that he was acting as an instrument of The Almighty in a titanic struggle between communism and Christianity"—with his own approach: "I believed simply that the acceptance of individual responsibility is the price we must all pay for living in a free society." Straight, of course, paid that "price" not in 1941, when he broke with Communism (as Chambers had in 1939), nor in the twenty years that followed, but only when events in his own career compelled candor. For that reason alone, he might have been better advised—by his editors, at least—to show more generosity toward those who paid a far greater and more immediate personal "price" than he did for his past involvement with Soviet agents.

How does the author reconcile the clear evidence of external compulsion and the self-evident absence of timely courage on his part for more than a generation? Straight flees the sugary romanticism of his earlier Communist commitment into a bittersweet aesthetic idealism. Again, in 1964 as in 1938, his "rabbi" appears to have been Anthony Blunt with whom—thanks to a meeting arranged by British intelligence agents—Straight is reconciled in the book's dramatic climax. Accuser and accused meet in the latter's home, with the British art historian actually thanking his American nemesis for having informed, thereby not only lifting "a heavy burden from my shoulders" but inquiring of Straight why he had finally acted as he did: "'Because of the arts,' I said. 'Because our government finally decided to support the arts,'" referring to the impending appointment that "forced me to face up to it at last." (In fairness, Straight apparently also meant to imply that he did not want his own circumstances to jeopardize the Kennedy arts program).

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Quite a bit actually, according to Straight, who might have taken as his real theme certain lines from the Yeats poem he used in his title that he chose not to quote: "The curtains drawn upon unfriendly night,/That we descant and yet again descant/Upon the supreme theme of Art and Song." Why? Because that, in essence, is what Blunt and Straight did at their moment of communion: ". . . we came to a new equilibrium in our relationship. . . . The power to heal lies in the present, not in the past. For Anthony and for me, it lay in the arts." Thus the two men end their conversation, locked in cordial colloquy about Cézanne and Poussin!

WHAT ARE WE to make of all this? First, Michael Straight is never far from his various literary anchorages, preferring not only the cadences of late-Yeatsian grief but also the *Sturm und Drang* of *After Long Silence*'s underlying analogy (referred to throughout the memoir). Essentially, the author compares himself to the tormented antihero of Joseph Conrad's *Under Western Eyes*, Razumov, an anomic figure who lacked either familial or national loyalties and who suffered irresolutely both the ordeal of betrayal and its consequences.

Before turning to those literary devices, I should note that both the book itself and subsequent public correspondence by Michael Straight raise questions not entirely resolved by his version of events. For one thing, surely his relationship to "Michael Green" was of sufficient consequence to the author to have deserved a more extensive portrayal, along with other aspects of that Cambridge Communist world described in his depositions to the F.B.I. and to British intelligence. Nor does Straight's recent letter to *The New York Times* in which he describes Guy Burgess as "far from being the 'top Soviet agent,'" merely "a minor and discredited official with no access to highly sensitive material," square either with Straight's own 1951 statements concerning Burgess (and to Burgess) in this book or with the well-known literature on Soviet espionage agents in England, some of which Straight mentions.

THE QUESTION of Straight's reliability as a witness in his own behalf on the dramatic events of this memoir remains for fuller assessment than a single review can provide. Straight describes another critical episode, this one subject to verification. While at State in 1940, he writes, he distributed to other government agencies a "STRICTLY CONFIDENTIAL" report by then-Ambassador to England Joseph Kennedy that predicted military defeat for the British. According to Straight, the report appeared on the front page of leading newspapers within days and, coming as it did late in the campaign of 1940, led Roosevelt to consider Kennedy's endorsement "worthless" and forced Kennedy to leave his post "in disgrace."

In fact, Joseph Kennedy returned to Washington from London late in the campaign precisely to endorse F.D.R. for a third term, and the Ambassador delivered radio addresses widely publicized by the Democrats to reinforce F.D.R.'s support among isolationist conservatives. Only *after* the election did Kennedy give an interview to *Boston Globe* reporter Louis Lyons, which fully expressed his belief that "democracy is all finished in England." The interview damaged his standing sufficiently to force a December 1, 1940, resignation. The facts are described thoroughly in Michael R. Beschloss's *Kennedy and Roosevelt: The Uneasy Alliance* (Norton). Are there similar flaws in Straight's rendition of more crucial events in his narrative of descent and return from the Communist underworld?

As it stands, *After Long Silence* contributes—whatever its weaknesses as history—a rich store of anecdotes and personal sketches of that galaxy of trans-Atlantic personages who figured in Michael Straight's crowded, complex life. If the author chooses to compare himself to Conrad's Razumov (Whittaker Chambers preferred Dostoevskian models), who can quarrel?

Each of us has our favorite fictional fantasies, but on the evidence of his

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memoir, Straight's account of his immersion in the world of Cambridge Communism might have borrowed its title as easily from W. H. Auden as from W. B. Yeats. The lines that come to mind appear in Auden's "September 1, 1939," verses occasioned by the author's soberly retrospective glance at his prewar generation of friends "lost in a haunted wood,/Children afraid of the night/Who have never been happy or good." Or, if we must meet with Razumov, why not at the moment in Conrad's narrative when he has set aside his written confessions to Natalia Victorovna only to concede an even harsher judgment:

> Now his scorn extended to himself. 'I had neither the simplicity nor the courage nor the self-possession to be a scoundrel, or an exceptionally able man. For who, with us in Russia, is to tell a scoundrel from an exceptionally able man? . . .'

ALLEN WEINSTEIN

Allen Weinstein, University Professor at Georgetown University and executive editor of *The Washington Quarterly*, wrote *Perjury: The Hiss-Chambers Case* (Vintage). He directs the bipartisan Democracy Program research study.

THE VANISHING VOTER

The Current Crisis in American Politics
by Walter Dean Burnham

(Oxford University Press, 322 pp., $19.95)

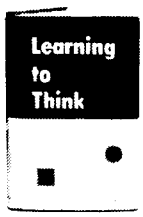
It is a mark of the waning of the radical impulse among journalists and intellectuals that the word "alienation" so rarely appears in discussions of our social and political problems. This is a case of mind lagging behind reality, for in empirical fact alienation flourishes. What Walter Dean Burnham calls "the largest mass movement of our time" is made up of the millions of politically alienated men and women who comprise the party of nonvoters. To gauge their centrality in our politics, consider two contrasts, one comparative, the other historical. While 90.4 percent of the eligible West Germans voted in their most recent national elections, 90.7 percent of the Swedes, 85.9 percent of the French, and 75.9 percent of the British, turnout in the United States was 55.1 percent. To make the point more emphatically, while Giscard d'Estaing got 40.2 percent of the French vote in losing to François Mitterrand, Ronald Reagan got 28 percent of the eligible vote in beating Jimmy Carter. Such a pathetic turnout would have shocked nineteenth-century Americans, who then constituted the freest and most fully mobilized electorate in the world, consistently showing turnouts of between 75 and 85 percent between 1840 and 1900. If the same proportion of the electorate had voted in 1976 as in 1888 (81 percent), Burnham points out, roughly 40 million more Americans would have participated in choosing their government. Even if the 1940 participation rate (62.4 percent) had been reached, the number would have risen by 12 million to 19 million. In New York City alone, if the 1940 percentages had been maintained, one-and-one-half million more New Yorkers would have cast ballots.

How politics and governance would be affected by the influx of between 20 million and 40 million voters to the electorate is impossible to say. Burnham thinks they would push the country left; but my colleague Charles Krauthammer points out that the most successful mobilizations of recent years have been on the right, in the Wallace campaigns of a decade ago and among the Moral Majority in 1980. Clearly, however, something would have to give, and the likely first casualty of wider participation would be the dominance that special interest groups have been able to exercise over public policy in the absence of a mobilized electorate.

Who are the nonvoters? According to Curtis Gans, director of the Center for the Study of the American Electorate, they fall into distinct groups. An estimated 5 to 7 percent are impeded by registration laws; in some states, for example, voters are purged from the rolls if they move, and must reregister in order to vote. Fifteen to 20 percent of the nonvoters once participated but have dropped out, disillusioned with politics. The 18- to 21-year-olds, if they ever vote at all, don't usually show up on the rolls until they reach their mid- to late 20s. By far the largest group of nonvoters (75 percent), however, is made up of blue collar and service workers and the poor, especially the black poor, as the 18 percent turnout in Shirley Chisholm's Brooklyn district in 1980 indicates. These class-skewed statistics point to a participation crisis in American politics that raises serious questions about the health of our democracy and the legitimacy of our governments. Burnham warns that this crisis also "perpetuates the standing danger that the half of the electorate which is now more or less entirely outside the universe of active politics may someday be mobilized . . . by totalitarian or quasi-totalitarian appeals."

Professor Burnham (political science, M.I.T.) does not narrow his focus to the

LEARNING TO THINK



By E. R. Emmett

Puzzles, diagrams and examples (both serious and lighthearted) are extensively used by the author who stresses the importance of logic in our everyday lives. He shows us how to think clearly and concisely and to make us enjoy the process. Exercises to test our ability to reason clearly are provided throughout this thought-provoking book. *Illustrated.*

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participation crisis. In this important and provocative collection of his essays, he also traces in impressive complexity the four-fold crisis of empire, economy, culture, and politics that engulfed the country in the 1970s, preparing the way for the successful revitalization campaign of Ronald Reagan. Other essays deal with incumbent insulation in Congressional elections, with "party systems" in the history of American politics, and with the role of theory in survey research. But repeatedly, even in essays on other topics, Burnham comes back to the questions: who votes, who doesn't, and what does it mean for our politics that the electorate is far more middle class than the general population? Burnham is a rigorous scholar who punctuates his pages with tables and graphs (77, by my count). But he also invokes structural theories of a Marxian/Gramscian hue; and while they do not damage my confidence in his data, they do reveal how much his findings owe to his a priori conviction that capitalism is in conflict with democracy. Burnham argues that this conflict accounts for the shrinkage of the American electorate after 1896, and that it may now be about to issue in an unprecedented "regime crisis." I am not sure what a regime crisis (on top of all the others!) is. A political disaster, clearly, that would result from a conflict between the modern state's need for the authority and legitimacy that only wider participation can confer, and the ban on debate over the economic system that keeps turnout low. Burnham claims that we will either witness the birth of a left labor party along the lines of the European social democrats, or we will continue to have a polity "significantly less democratic than . . . any other Western political system which conducts free elections." Leave out the regime crisis, the current state of affairs is bad enough, a blight on the promise of democracy.

AND LEAVE OUT capitalism too (although the corporation makes a good target for a populist upsurge), for the real enemy of a genuinely left-wing politics is the individualist cultural ethos of America, as Burnham well knows. The poor and working classes may be alienated from politics, but are they alienated from this cultural ethos? I doubt it. (I remember being shocked by polls showing how unpopular George McGovern's proposal to raise inheritance taxes was among blue-collar workers.) This may be "false consciousness" on their part, since a more egalitarian system would better serve their interests. But I suspect that it is also the residue of immigrant hope mixed with native idealism, and that in any case it amounts to the national character. You don't take that off like a pair of pants. Just as personal character limits individual possibility, so national character narrows the range of political debate and experiment. Perhaps a great vastation like a regime crisis would break the cultural grip of individualist values and consciousness, but if it withstood the Depression, it is likely to weather any shock. Ideas are remarkably impervious to experience, and when experience is as bad, relatively, as that of the poor in this wealthy country, even false ideas can be a source of genuine hope.

BURNHAM'S ACCOUNT of the demobilization of the nineteenth-century electorate centers on the election of 1896 and its aftermath. During the nearly thirty years of Republican rule following 1896, voter turnout declined from 79.5 percent to its all time low of 48.9 percent in 1924. Take your pick of causes. Number one on my list would be the losing Democratic candidate in 1896 as well as in 1900 and 1908—William Jennings Bryan, an old-line American with no appeal to the ethnic working classes of the Northern cities. The repeated nomination of this strictly sectional candidate (Burnham points out that over 85 percent of his vote came from the South and border states) ended serious national political competition, giving turnout a downward kick. In addition, a series of election law reforms were passed in these years that seriously eroded turnout. After 1900, poll taxes and literacy tests disenfranchised Southern blacks so completely that Southern voting dipped to an abysmal 8.5 percent in the Congressional elections of 1926. Outraged at nineteenth-century voting fraud, Progressive reformers imposed personal registration requirements that placed an extra hurdle in the path of voters. These years also saw the widespread adoption of the Australian ballot, which replaced the party-issued tickets of the nineteenth century. This "reform" made ticket splitting easier, thereby weakening the parties and the party spirit, the prime engines of the nineteenth-century mobilization. Finally, the size of the electorate grew prodigiously after 1900, as waves of immigrants and, after 1920, women, became eligible to vote. Burnham rather downplays the statistical significance of this sheer increase in numbers.

This was the period of America's most rapid industrial expansion and capital accumulation. The "modernizing elites" who directed these processes, Burnham suggests, would not have had such a free hand if they had come up against the mobilized democracy of the nineteenth century. Thus the shrinkage of the electorate served the "system adaptation" of corporate capitalism. In early twentieth-century Europe, mass-based Socialist parties arose to check the exactions of industrialism, but in America Socialism was an "excluded" alternative. Consequently, a gap opened in the electorate where a Socialist party should have been. Some of the voters in that gap became Democrats in the realigning elections of the 1930s, but with the replacement of Dr. New Deal by Dr. Win the War, turnout again declined. It rose slightly in the 1950s and early 1960s, then began a pattern of decline broken only by the blip of the 1982 Congressional elections. Looking back at this data, it is tempting to compare the low turnout 1920s and late 1970s with the higher turnout 1930s and 1960s and conclude that participation falls when capital accumulation is on the national agenda and rises when redistribution is in the air. If this is the critical variable, then the 1980s, when both parties are stressing the necessity of accumulation, are not likely to see the widening of democracy.

Burnham rides his thesis of an inevitable conflict between modern capitalism and democracy a trifle hard. For example, while he recognizes that the fully mobilized electorate of the post-Civil War era was not debating the economic system, he does not understand how this admission contradicts his overall thesis that capitalist hegemony stifles wider participation. He points out that politics in the nineteenth century was the chief form of public entertainment, but does not follow through by listing the inventions and cultural innovations that brought entertainment off the streets and into the living rooms between 1900 and 1928, replacing politics with privacy. Such evidence complicates the metaphysical logic by which the "system stress" of capitalism somehow demobilizes the electorate.

But Burnham's most puzzling caesura is his failure to discuss the Socialist Party that emerged after 1900. Why did this party fail to fill the gap left by the Democrats? Its Presidential candidate, Eugene

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V. Debs, won nearly one million votes in 1912. How was voter alienation channeled in his direction? Who were those voters, and what characteristics distinguished them from other Americans of the time? My guess is that many were new immigrants who, to the degree that they became Americanized, experienced strong cross pressures between their commitment to Socialist class consciousness and their desire to fit in to their new country. On this hypothesis, Debs's real enemy was not capitalism but assimilation to the culture that is prior to, and all too concordant with, capitalism.

THE HYPOTHESIS of cross pressures, which Seymour Martin Lipset defines as "pressures brought to bear on individuals and groups which operate in opposing directions" leading to voter abstention, is also useful in analyzing the decline in participation in the 1970s. Feeling strong cross pressures between their traditional ties to country, family, religion, neighborhood, and prejudice on one side, and their economic interests on the other, people who should have voted Democratic dropped out of the electorate rather than vote for a party that made national guilt a cause (McGovern), that induced a recession to curb inflation (Carter), and that devoted most of its energy to divisive social issues, upper-middle-class environmental anxieties, and judicial activism on behalf of the worthy but hardly popular causes. In these years the Democrats virtually became a party of the professional classes, while blue-collar issues such as full employment, security against downturns in the business cycle, and national health insurance fell afoul of the "fiscal conservatism" so popular among today's neoliberals.

As for the 1980s, any "neoliberal" effort to build a national constituency must confront a painful electoral reality, ably outlined by Burnham. In 1932 California had 20 Congressmen, Florida 5, Pennsylvania 33, and New York 45. In 1982 California had 45, Florida 19, Pennsylvania 23, and New York 34. Plainly electoral power is following the surge of the population South and West, reversing the electoral map of the Republican victory in 1896. Says Burnham, "... the magnitude of the relative slide to Reagan appears closely related to the physical location of winners and losers in the ... demographic and class structure in the U.S." This new geography of power means that Democrats can only win by carrying the shrinking "ex metropole" of the North and Midwest, and to do that they will have to mobilize the millions of blue-collar and poor Americans whose abstention in 1980 cost Jimmy Carter his job. Reagan's victory, and, even more, the Republican capture of the Senate, have served notice that the middle-class voting universe is stretched tight, that it has a decided conservative tilt, that elections are won not in college towns or in the editorial columns of *The New York Times*, but in Queens and Brooklyn, Roxbury and Dorchester, Bridgeport and the South Side. The thin amalgam of tenderness toward the capital needs of hi-tech business, efficiency in defense spending, softness on social issues and hardness on domestic spending that is neoliberalism—this middle-class makeshift does not seem the stuff of which blue-collar mobilizations are made. If this is what the Democrats will offer them, the nonvoters may stay home, throwing future elections to the party of the class and geographic winners.

THE DEMOCRATS' best hope is that Ronald Reagan has hit poor and blue-collar Americans so hard that they will stand in voting lines to hit back in 1984. Ambitious, if financially straitened, drives are already under way to register the 10 million Americans receiving food stamps, the 27 million families with annual incomes less than $10,000, and the millions on unemployment compensation. Social activists Richard Cloward and Frances Fox Piven have proposed a strategy to transform the Democratic Party by having social service workers register the thousands who come before them every day. Government lawyers have said that the Hatch Act would not bar government workers from participating in such a voter registration drive, if it were truly nonpartisan. So the way is clear for the Piven-Cloward strategy, which will be tried first in New York City. The similiar efforts of Project Vote, a voluntary organization representing civil rights, labor, and other groups, have already borne electoral fruit, having registered 82,000 people in seven states this past fall. And Harold Washington's upset victory in Chicago owes much to voter registration efforts among that city's black traditional nonvoters.

Drives to register the nonvoters will be attacked by the same forces who defeated Jimmy Carter's register-by-mail proposal in 1977, and who stymied Democratic bills mandating Election Day registration in 1971, 1973, 1975, 1976, and 1977. It is plainly in the interests of Republicans to have a voting universe made up exclusively of the middle and upper classes. Republicans are the single most mobilized group in our polity; they go to the polls as if they were banks, as indeed they are—for them. But to stand on the Capitol Mall on the A.F.L.-C.I.O.'s Solidarity Day, the largest demonstration in Washington in thirty years, was to see the faces of a different voting universe. As white machinists from Clinton, Iowa, applauded black speakers attacking Reaganomics, a moved observer could be forgiven for thinking that here was the symbolic surface of the most cohesive Democratic alignment since the reaction against the targeted policies of the Great Society began. Here was an alignment created by the worst recession, and the most indifferent government, since the Great Depression cemented the old Democratic alignment with the bonds of victory. The question is, will these Americans get a New Deal?

JACK BEATTY

"THANKS TO LIBERAL RHETORIC, we spend much of our time in a cultural museum, a time capsule of nineteenth century iconography. In an age of states gone berserk, of Stalin and Hitler, we spend inordinate amounts of time worrying about robber barons—Henry Frick. In an era of comprehensive social welfare, we are still afraid that only the latest spending measure stands between Oliver Twist and the workhouse. A little intellectual housekeeping is overdue."

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THE BUSINESS OF LAW

The Partners
by James B. Stewart

(Simon and Schuster, 395 pp., $16.95)

For years we've been stuck with two kinds of writing about the law: the ignorant school and the school of disdain. Writers from the former are easy to spot: they invariably begin their stories with Shakespeare's admonition to "kill all the lawyers" and end with something from *Bleak House* or Swift. In between we get the names of the lawyers, and the judge, if we are lucky, but we won't learn the facts or theory of the case, the names of the law firms these lawyers have spent their lives in, or the amount of money they will be paid.

The second bloc, while less ingenuous, isn't much more on target. Their musings, found in magazines like *The Washington Monthly*, portray most lawyers as boorish and money-hungry and the profession itself as soporific, overpriced, and a waste of good talent. While this genre has a certain populist appeal, it has little credibility among those who have ever really needed a lawyer, and none at all among the players in corporate life.

In the last half-dozen years we've seen the makings of a third school. General-interest magazines have begun to chronicle the tales of takeover specialists. And a triad of legal publications has emerged, striving to cover the profession as a trade, like *Barron's* or *Variety*. Their writers often surmount the problems of the two schools, but the moment they meet the credibility challenge through documentation and thoroughness, they often lose the uninitiated with dull writing and unexplained argot.

James B. Stewart's *The Partners* is the first long work from this third school to transcend these limitations. Stewart, a Harvard Law School graduate and former associate at New York's Cravath, Swaine & Moore, is now executive editor of *American Lawyer*, one of the three new legal publications. He has produced a book that not only delights those who have never seen the inside of a corporate law firm, but rings true for those who have devoted their lives to these firms as well. *The Partners* explores corporate law's great paradox: it is both the most elite and pretentious of professions and a rough-and-tumble business with profit centers and power struggles, just like IBM, Westinghouse, or any other corporate client these firms slave for.

Avoiding labyrinthine legal prose, Stewart has written a book that can be as revealing in its details of corporate shenanigans as David McClintick's *Indecent Exposure*, the behind-the-scenes account of the Begelman affair at Columbia Pictures. But Stewart's task was far more formidable than McClintick's. While many of the subjects in *Indecent Exposure* must have clamored to get their side of the story told, no lawyers in *The Partners* sought Stewart out, and most probably now wish they had never agreed to be interviewed. Thus *The Partners*, which details the inner workings of nine firms on some of the most intriguing news stories in recent years, such as the international banking negotiations prefacing the release of the hostages, the unraveling of the Rockefeller will, and the decision by the Justice Department to drop the IBM antitrust case, represents a monumental reporting job. Stewart does not trade on inside information; while he did toil for several years at Cravath, his chapter on the firm's handling of the IBM matter—a case he did not work on—eschews firsthand detail gleaned as an associate. This is no locker room diatribe against powerful institutions, it is a studied account of what it means to be in the business of law in America today, written by someone who genuinely *likes* lawyers.

What can be learned from *The Partners*? The first lesson is positive. Anecdotal in his description of the way these firms represent their clients, Stewart shows that corporations get much more than their money's worth when they hire a Sullivan & Cromwell in New York, a Kirkland & Ellis in Chicago, or a Pillsbury, Madison & Sutro in San Francisco to bail them out of hostile takeovers, punitive contracts, or sticky negotiations with the S.E.C. We see attorneys from New York's Debevoise & Plimpton helping to save Chrysler from bankruptcy through sheer tenacity, ignoring Thanksgiving, Christmas, illness, spouses, and even a raging fire that threatens to destroy their documents if they don't remove them.

Meanwhile, stingier or poorer clients who hire less than blue chip end up with attorneys who stumble in court and punt good cases through indolence and a lack of creativity; in the end, they cost their companies far more than their dearer counterparts. Lawyers for the government, with the exception of Lloyd Cutler and Robert Mundheim, both now in private practice, are portrayed as inept and slothful, unwilling to do battle with the elite. Corporations can seemingly buy justice by picking the right firm, which will then overwhelm the opposition with paper or blow them away through homework and staffing. Only a rare shrewd judge, or an ornery one like David Edelstein, the judge in the IBM case, can equalize matters.

THROUGH his description of the assignments these firms labor on, Stewart gives us great insight into what associates—the grunts of the firm—really do. Thus we learn what it means to "mark up" a loan agreement or Shepardize a case, both mindless tasks but clearly the mainstays of today's corporate and litigation practices at the associate level. Each discrete area of the law—contracts, property, civil procedure, corporate finance, and tax, all except for torts, or personal injury, which is beneath these firms—is woven artfully into the texture of the stories.

But Stewart, in a subtle, not strident way, points up some far more disturbing aspects of these nine elite firms. First, the upper levels of these firms are pure white male. Women, when they are mentioned, are almost all associates, and few of their number seem destined for the tenured ranks. Blacks? Forget it—not a one.

Second, Stewart points out the lack of commitment to public service or pro bono work. When the subject comes up, it's either in jest, as when a Sullivan & Cromwell associate gets kidded for bringing a plaintiff's suit on behalf of Kennecott Copper that has the earmarks of a civil rights litigation, or, in contempt, as in the case of partners who seem forever to be exiled to pro bono matters when their competence gives out and they can't be trusted with paying clients. As far as lawyers' thinking beyond the immediate interests of their clients, Stewart shows us that down to the wire in the Iranian hostage crisis, firms such as Steptoe & Johnson in Washington were willing to jeopardize the whole deal

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for a few manufacturing clients.

The Partners oozes with the contempt these lawyers feel for just about everyone else, but most particularly for the clients, who are portrayed as bungling, impotent lackeys, or "grundoons" as the Cravath associates took to calling the IBM execs they worked for. Perhaps most disturbing of all is the toll these firms take on some of our nation's best minds. The grab for partner is all consuming. Because of firm economics, specifically the pyramid style of operation with a highly paid partner overseeing layers of lower-paid associates—all being billed out at rates much higher than they are paid—large classes of associates must be pruned after seven or eight years. With all associates already scaling to the highest level of the meritocratic ladder *before* entering the firm, the partners can't choose on sheer brains alone the new members of their ranks. So the contest becomes both more visceral and subtle. Billable hours take on palpable significance. A lawyer bills 24 hours in one day, a firm record, only to be bested immediately by another lawyer making shrewd use of a coast-to-coast trip to log 27 hours. Chance plays an awesome role: an assignment with an uninfluential partner can be dangerous, a linking with an unpopular one, deadly. Vacations, marriage, health, politics, outside interests, all are cashiered in the name of the challenge. Most important, associates fall over one another to ingratiate themselves with whichever partner seems to carry the most weight that moment. Those who lose out in the struggle are consigned to the wastebin of permanent associatedom or banished to a small midtown firm.

Is it worth it for those who get admitted to the partnership? That's unclear from *The Partners*. The money may be good, but with the exception of one independent Pillsbury partner who leaves for his honeymoon at a crucial moment in a deal, most of the partners here spend as much time in the trenches as the associates. While partnership beats academic tenure in its security, partners here mistreat and humiliate one another with regularity. But, as Stewart shows in his chapters on the hostage crisis and the IBM victories, the quarterbacking partner has more than his share of exhilarating moments and triumphs.

The Partners does have a few nagging problems. While the research on the firms is fastidious, Stewart does stray, for example, when he says that Sullivan & Cromwell represents British Petroleum, "one of Sohio's world rivals." British Petroleum owns Sohio. And he is a decade off when he says that the last big proxy fights took place in the 1940s.

STEWART also suffers from the same prejudice that all writers from *American Lawyer* harbor—including this writer when I was a staff reporter there a few years back: too much emphasis is put on the role of the lawyer, and never enough on the role of the clients who pay the bills. To read *The Partners* is to believe that the banks' lawyers were responsible for the hostages' release, or that IBM's lawyers alone should be credited for the Justice Department's abdication, or that Chrysler's counsel "saved" the ailing automaker. They all may have played a role, but political and financial considerations, not to mention the principals themselves, deserve a bit more credit than Stewart dispenses. Also, while the lawyers here may have contempt for those unfortunates who pay through the nose for their services, they certainly don't show it to the clients' faces. In fact, the partners are often as sycophantic to the "grundoons" of the world as the associates are to them, because law, ultimately, is a *service* business. These quibbles, however, are minor. Considering how little the public, including many noncorporate lawyers, knows about the crucial roles these corporate lawyers can play, Stewart's efforts can only be saluted.

JAMES J. CRAMER

James J. Cramer is a student at Harvard Law School.

COMING:

Gordon C. Craig on General Marshall.

BRIEF REVIEW

Contemporaries From the Nineteenth Century to the Present (new and revised edition) by Alfred Kazin

(Horizon Press, 424 pp., $9.95 paper)

"I grew up as what my old friend and teacher Mark Van Doren called a 'private reader,' " Alfred Kazin writes in "To Be a Critic," the introductory essay to the new edition of *Contemporaries*. He continues:

> Nothing in the world was so delightful, my own pleasure principle, as taking more and more books every day out of the Public Library. . . . I spent the better part of every day reading; I lived to read. There were never enough books for this—never enough words to describe the transformation taking place in me as I read. . . . There was that in me, reading myself into the writing of my first book year after year at the golden tables in Room 315 above Forty-Second Street, that was an experience of human advancement and liberation too subtle to be shared. Only writing about it, an act of criticism, confronting a text, could express some of the pent-up thinking involved in absorbing, moving with all those black marks on paper.
>
> And what did one read for? Why so *much*? Because it was understood . . . that 'you must know everything.' If reading was not indiscriminate and omnivorous, endlessly exploratory, seeking knowledge at every turn and from the most neglected of books as well as the most famous, what was it?

None of the pieces that follow, whether among the half-dozen newly added to *Contemporaries* or among those retained from the 1962 edition, contains anything to contradict the rapture, exhilaration and, yes, nobility of the passage quoted above. They all bear the stamp of the author of *On Native Grounds*, *A Walker in the City*, and *New York Jew*.

Reading "To Be a Critic," one understands why Kazin has been a force on the American literary scene for forty years now; reading *Contemporaries* as a whole, one understands how. In his recently published memoirs, *A Margin of Hope*, Irving Howe lists the qualities of various critics that, as a young man starting out in the 1940s, he envied and strove to emu-

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late; among them was "the rhetorical plenitude of an Alfred Kazin." *Contemporaries* amply demonstrates what Howe means. It is unthinkable that anyone happening upon an individual Kazin piece might overlook his profound learning and great passion for literature; but without experiencing him seriatim, as in *Contemporaries*, one can hardly appreciate the amazing fluency of his prose.

Kazin remains a *substantative* stylist, however, ringing his changes as much for argumentative purpose as for the simple pleasure of hearing himself peal. He is a man of many opinions, and of little reticence in expressing them. For all its diversity, *Contemporaries* definitely has both heroes—Freud, Keats, Edmund Wilson, Faulkner, the writers of the American renaissance, New York City—and villains, who are not so much villainous, as they are manifestations of, or capitulations to, that which Kazin most detests in literature and throughout all the arts: an inability to acknowledge "life in its beautiful and inexpressible materiality"; the absence of "a feeling for the value of life, for the body of this world—for that which cannot be explained because it is too precious to be turned into symbols."

If *Contemporaries* has a fundamental core, it consists of such literary humanism. "There is no substitute for life, for the direct impression of life; there is no deep truth about life, such as writers bring home to us, that does not come in the form of more life," Kazin writes.

> To anyone who really knows how rare and precious imaginative creation is . . . how infinitely real in suggestion is the character that has been created in and through imagination, there is something finally unbearable, the very opposite of what literature is for, in the metallic kind of writing which now so often serves in a novel to 'motivate' character.

Today, as Derrida deconstructs, Hartman hyperventilates, and Fiedler fiddles while a loose canon burns, such sentiments seem almost hopelessly anachronistic. Yet not so much as to fail to move and inspirit. "To be a critic," Kazin suggests, "nothing else is so important as the ability to stand one's ground alone."

Or one's native ground.

MARK FEENEY

Mark Feeney is on the staff of *The Boston Globe*.

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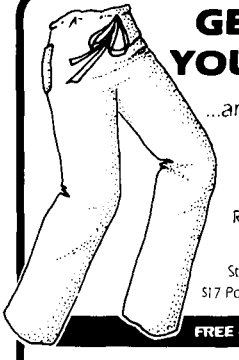

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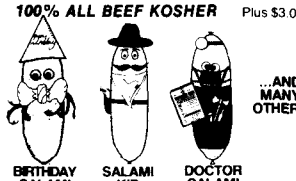
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Oxford Diarist

Debates, Old and New

ON FEBRUARY 9 the Oxford Union Debating Society marked the fiftieth anniversary of the famous debate, "That this House will in no circumstances fight for its King and Country." The motion, passed in 1933 by a vote of 275 to 153, was widely taken as evidence of British unwillingness to stand up to foreign aggression. Winston Churchill termed it "That abject, squalid, shameless avowal in the debating society of our most famous university." Fleet Street reacted with vigor. The conservative *Daily Express* attributed the vote to "practical jokers, woozy-minded Communists, and sexual indeterminates." *The Times* haughtily headlined its editorial "The Children's Hour," and the Cambridge reply to Oxford pacifists was a curt "Cancel the Boat Race." Randolph Churchill tried to wipe the vote off the Union's records by proposing a motion a month later. As Telford Taylor says in *Munich: The Price of Peace*, the "critical reaction was overwhelmed by the counterreaction." Randolph Churchill's motion was defeated, 750 to 138. Fifty years later, the issue was revived. The motion read, "That this House would not fight for Queen and Country," and three British networks televised the debate. Otherwise, little had changed. The arguments invoked by both sides of the House were eerily reminiscent of those made fifty years ago. Speakers for the "Ayes" defended pacifism and unilateralism; speakers for the "Noes" advocated deterrence and multilateralism. The student proposer of the motion denied the possibility of a just war in the nuclear age. In such a event, he said, "there will be no country." The rest of the debate turned on the nuclear question. The first speaker for the opposition said that aggression is encouraged if it is ignored: the second speaker for the proposition described himself as "a Communist agitator" for the benefit of Fleet Street, and said he'd rather be Red than dead. The fourth and final student speaker criticized the pacifists for condemning their opponents on the basis of nonconformance to a principle of perfection, calling them "purveyors of martyrdom."

THE FIRST OF THE guest speakers was Helen John, a leader of the Greenham Common women's peace movement, which has camped out at an American military base to protest the incipient installation of cruise missiles. "We are an occupied country," she said to a chorus of snickers. "The Americans talk like us but don't think like us." She then declared her opposition to democracies "making decisions in our name." Referring to the United States, she admonished, "Don't let the fascist aggressors dominate our lives." The Honourable Douglas Hogg, a Tory member of Parliament whose father had spoken against the motion fifty years ago, asked Mrs. John where she had been in 1977, when the Soviet Union deployed its first batch of SS-20s. She did not respond. Then the Reverend the Lord Soper, who had opposed the war against Hitler on pacifist grounds, spoke in favor. He called for a "new, positive spirit" based on hope instead of fear. The evening's most moving address came from Lord Max Beloff, the British political historian who, as a student, had spoken in favor of the motion in 1933. "Six million of my co-religionists practiced nonviolence," he said. In any case, he continued, a genuine pacifist would not show the hatred of the United States that Mrs. John did. He wanted to "atone for foolish arrogance," and he dedicated his remarks to his Union friends who had died fighting in World War II.

THE FINAL TWO speakers gave expression to the sharp polarization in contemporary British politics. Tariq Ali was Union president in the early 1970s and leader of the Oxford student revolt (the most notable victory of which made the wearing of gowns at dinner optional). Unlike many of his American counterparts, he has not drifted to the right. He is a Trotskyite, and he argued that the butchery of World War I created the atmosphere in which Fascism flourished. He blamed British banks for consorting with Germany until 1938, and then tried to explain things from the Soviet perspective (neglecting to mention the Nazi-Soviet Pact). "I don't want to fight for a system that produces unemployment and misery," he declared. The last speaker was Lord Alec Douglas-Home of the Hirsel, Conservative Prime Minister in the early 1960s. He accompanied Neville Chamberlain to Munich, and derived this lesson from the experience: "Military weakness provides an open invitation to dictators who deal in force." He said that pacifist sentiment had encouraged Stanley Baldwin to delay rearmament for two years in the 1930s, adding that those who support deterrence "are not immoral or un-Christian."

IN THE END, the "Noes" carried the day 416 to 187, dramatically reversing the original verdict. The vote reflected partly a willingness to muddle through in the face of intractable problems, and partly the Union's overwhelmingly Tory composition. Speakers who supported the motion apparently felt that their Socialism or pacifism precluded criticism of totalitarianism. The desire to view the U.S. and the U.S.S.R. symmetrically cast doubt on the proposition's strongest arguments. Speakers on the other side of the House stressed that they also sought peace, but too readily linked their values with Victorian principles that occasionally verged on cultural chauvinism. Members of Helen John's Greenham Common group recently disrupted a debate in Parliament, showing contempt for free speech; members of the Thatcher government continue to strut around daring the Argentines to knock the Falklands off their shoulders. In British politics there seems to be little hope for finding a path between the twin dangers of moral retreat and moral recklessness. With speculation about the date of the next election grown intense, both Tories and Labourites have already begun their assault on the center-left Alliance. A vote for the Alliance, say the Tories, is a vote for Labour; a vote for the Alliance, say Labour members, is a vote for the Tories. It is doubtful that the two largest parties will take responsibility for the mathematical consequences of their pronouncements. By the commutative property (one plus one equals two; thus two equals one plus one), a vote for either the Tories or Labour becomes a vote for the Alliance, and we should expect a Liberal-Social Democratic landslide. But it isn't likely.

Laurence Graftstein

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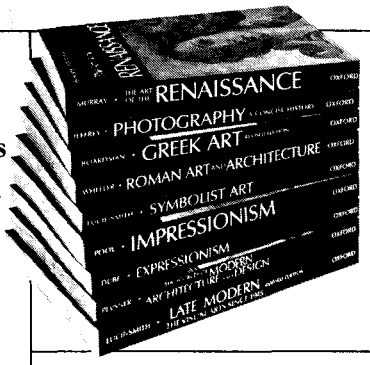

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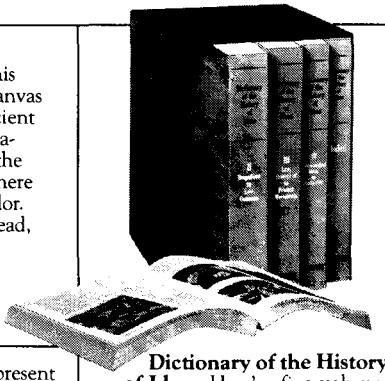

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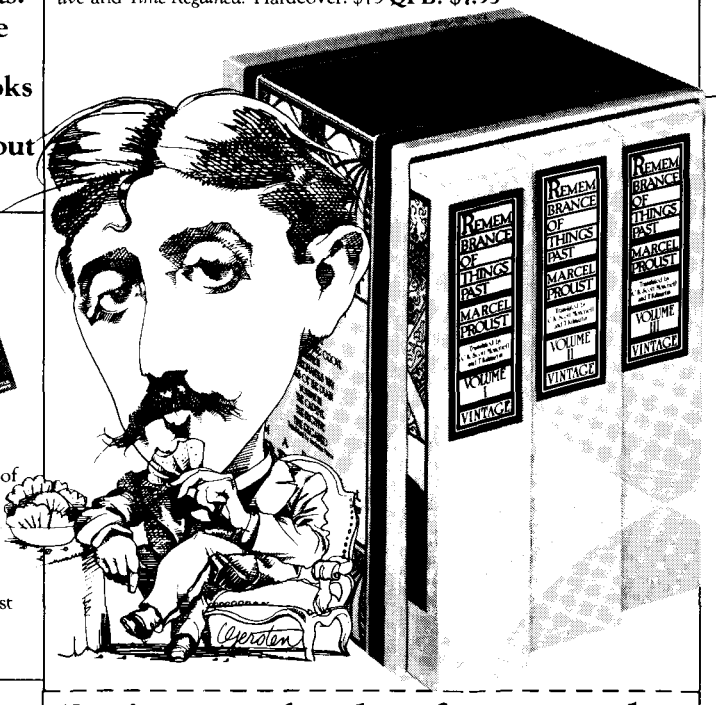

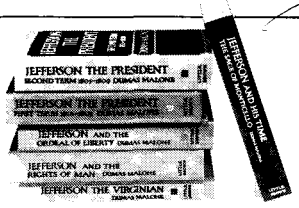

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